

Jordan Times

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Qadhafi: Weather caused Lockerbie crash

ROME (R) — Libyan leader Muammar Qadhafi said the weather caused the 1988 Lockerbie air disaster which killed 270 people — not a Libyan bomb as charged by the United States and Britain. "The technical reports on the cause of the crash of Pan Am Flight 103 show that it was not provoked by an explosion but by meteorological conditions," Col. Qadhafi said in an interview televised on Italy's private Telemontecarlo network Monday. He said the unidentified reports determined that the Boeing 747 exploded only after it crashed on to the Scottish town of Lockerbie and ploughed through a petrol station. "All this notwithstanding, the investigators followed the hypothesis that the explosion took place in the air," he said. British and U.S. investigators focused almost immediately on sabotage as the likely cause of the crash. Pan Am 103 was flying at about 9,500 metres when radio contact was suddenly lost, without a distress call. The three-year probe to indictments last month of Libyans Abdul Baset Ali Mohammad Al Megrahi and Al Amin Khalifa Fhimah for planting a bomb on the jet.

Iraq: Shortages killed 80,000 children

CAIRO (R) — Iraq said Tuesday that 80,000 of its children have died because of shortages caused by U.N. sanctions imposed over its invasion of Kuwait. "More than 80,000 children under the age of five have died so far," envoy Nabil Najim Al Takriti said after handing the Cairo-based Arab League a list of urgently-needed medical supplies. "The sanctions threaten further deaths among children, women and old people," said Mr. Takriti, Baghdad's emissary to the 21-member league. Mr. Takriti asked Arab League Secretary-General Esmat Abdul Meguid to urge member states to send it medicine. The envoy said Iraq had run out of key drugs including cancer treatments. Iraq said last month that 65,000 children had died because of shortages of food and medicine and another 350,000 were at risk this winter. The U.N. Children's Fund (UNICEF) said the figures were realistic. Medicines and essential food are excluded from the U.N. embargo but most of Iraq's foreign assets are frozen, leaving it short of hard currency. (No quick easing of sanctions, page 2)

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King thanks Abu Hassan, Abu Ghazaleh

AMMAN (Petra) — His Majesty King Hussein Monday sent letters to former Royal Jordanian (RJ) Chairman Khaldoun Abu Hassan and former RJ director general Husam Abu Ghazaleh to thank them for their sincere efforts while serving in the national air carrier. Mr. Abu Hassan and Mr. Abu Ghazaleh resigned from their posts recently.

Syria pardons 2,864 political prisoners

DAMASCUS (R) — President Hafez Al Assad has pardoned 2,864 prisoners who committed crimes against national security, Syrian Interior Minister Mohammad Harba announced Tuesday. He said all those pardoned were being freed immediately. He gave no further details. Diplomats said that some of those pardoned were members of the fundamentalist Islamic Brotherhood who committed armed attacks against the regime. The pardons follow Mr. Assad's reelection for a fourth consecutive term on Dec. 2. Official returns said he got over 99 percent of the vote in a yes-or-no referendum.

Italian police arrest suspected guerrilla

ROME (R) — Italian police said Tuesday they were holding an Arab suspected of working for guerrilla leader Abu Nidal. Khaldoun Birawi Thamer, 31, and five others were held on charges of belonging to outlawed guerrilla groups, they said. Thamer, detained in Rome on Monday and accused of subversive association and membership of an armed band, is suspected by investigators of belonging to Fatah Revolutionary Council, the tight-knit clandestine organisation led by Abu Nidal. The Italians, four men and a woman, were taken into custody in Bologna as suspected members of the left-wing group called Red Brigades-Urban Guerrillas for Communism. Documents found during the Bologna raid showed the group had contact with urban guerrillas in Germany's Red Army faction and the French Action Directe group, police said.

Woman named British spy chief

LONDON (AP) — Britain Monday announced that a 56-year-old woman would become the next chief of its domestic intelligence service — a position that did not officially exist until two years ago. Stella Rimington, deputy to the current director general of MI5, Sir Patrick Walker, is the first woman to hold the position. Her appointment is effective in February when Mr. Walker retires. Mrs. Rimington, a member of the security services for 22 years, will be responsible for all counter-intelligence activities in Britain and Northern Ireland. "That is no mere civil service appointment," said Chapman, a veteran writer on espionage. The head of MI5 is an administrator who is ultimately responsible for directing counter-espionage operations and coordinating with other security organisations, he said. The job pays £77,500 pounds (\$140,000) a year.

Picco sent back to Mideast

UNITED NATIONS (AP) — Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar said Tuesday that he has sent his hostage negotiator, Chilean diplomat Pico Picco, back to the Mideast to try to wrap up the problem of missing and detained persons. "He is always where I need him," Mr. Perez de Cuellar said as he entered U.N. headquarters. When asked whether Mr. Picco was currently needed in the Middle East, the U.N. chief chuckled and nodded affirmatively. Mr. Perez de Cuellar said he is trying to win freer access for the last Western hostages held in Lebanon. German relief workers Thomas Kempfner and Heinrich Struëbig, resolve the problem of missing Israeli air-crew, persuade Israel to release up to 300 Arab detainees it holds in southern Lebanon, recover the bodies of slain American hostages and learn the fate of five missing Iranians, believed kidnapped and killed in Lebanon.

Washington stand-off continues; co-sponsors may have to step in

By Jordan Times Staff Reporters in Washington

JORDANIAN AND Palestinian chief negotiators failed to reach agreement with their Israeli counterparts yesterday on splitting the talks into two separate tracks, throwing the door open for the Americans to intervene in an effort to break the deadlock. Abdul Salam Majali and Haidar Abdul Shafi met again with the leader of the Israeli delegation, Elyakim Rubenstein, in the corridor of the State Department, but the session produced no accord on Arab insistence for separate Palestinian representation and Israeli rejection

of this principle. The talks recessed at 1 p.m. (Washington time) when the Jordanian side had to meet with State Department officials for a pre-scheduled session on multilateral talks. Dr. Majali later held a one-on-one session with Assistant Secretary of State for Near-East Affairs Edward Djerejian and discussed with him the deadlock reached with the Israelis in the bilateral talks. According to well-informed sources, Mr. Djerejian heard Dr. Majali's assessment and briefed him on the talks held earlier in the day between President George Bush and visiting Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy.

"Dr. Majali told the American official that the Arab side has done everything possible to solve the issue of Palestinian representation along lines drawn in the U.S. letters of assurance and invitation, but that the Israelis persisted in their rejection of the two-track approach," one of the sources told the Jordan Times. "Dr. Majali made it clear that the joint delegation has had enough with Israeli procrastination, and that we were fast approaching the point of asking for intervention from the co-sponsors to break the deadlock," the source added. The sources refused to say that the session entailed a Jordanian formal request from the Amer-

icans to intervene, maintaining that the meeting at the State Department was pre-planned and took place only on the margin of discussions on the multilateral talks which are scheduled to take place in Moscow on Jan. 28-29. The Palestinian side was scheduled to meet Mr. Djerejian and his aides at 3 p.m. (Washington time) to discuss the multilateral, and another session between the Arab and Israeli negotiators was planned for 5 p.m. In the morning session, Dr. Majali and Dr. Abdul Shafi handed Mr. Rubenstein a joint letter in which the said Israeli insistence on assigning the joint delegation the role of "a third

Syria and Israel trade charges

SYRIA AND Lebanon held separate bilateral talks with Israel Wednesday, but no progress was reported. Syrian Ambassador Muwaffak Alfat said the Israeli side has refused to discuss its commitments in the peace process. He said the Israeli attitude was the real obstacle to progress. He added that the Syrian delegation was willing to continue talks here as long as needed. Israeli negotiators accused Syria of supporting "terrorism" and said its vote against the United Nations repeal of the "Zionism equals racism" resolution

showed that Damascus still did not recognise the legitimacy of the Jewish state. Until it did, there was no point even talking about the return of occupied territory, said chief Israeli negotiator Yossi Ben Aharon. "Before we broach this subject, Syria must give us a signal that it is moving away from its previous rejectionist stance of delegitimisation of Israel," he said. Syria demands unconditional Israeli withdrawal from the occupied Golan Heights as part of U.N. Resolution 242, the legal basis for the negotiations. Israel

contends it complied with the resolution by giving Sinai back to Egypt in 1982. "I am afraid there is the intention by the Israeli delegation to consider tomorrow as the last day of this round so we are insisting we said we prefer as long as possible before Christmas," said Mr. Alfat. Mr. Alfat said Syria wanted the talks to stay in Washington and accused Israel of wasting time by raising anew its demand for the negotiations to move close to the Middle East.

King urges Arabs to adopt democracy

By Rana Sabbagh Reuters

AMMAN — His Majesty King Hussein, who describes Jordan as a beacon for democracy in a region dominated by one-party states, has urged Arab leaders to follow the path of political pluralism. "We cannot swim in the opposite direction and move upstream in a world that is moving towards greater democracy and popular participation," said the 56-year-old King.

"Many forms of governments are things of the past... dictatorships, one single party system, ideological armed forces... we should take lessons from all these developments and really concentrate on the human being and serve his cause," he said. The King, the Arab World's longest-serving ruler, said he wanted Jordan's moves towards democracy to set an example to other states in the Middle East. "We are determined to keep going in that direction (democra-

cy) and we believe that the role the Jordanians have is a tremendous one to provide a good example to others," he said in an interview with Reuters and the international television news agency Visnews Monday. "There is abuse, there is a situation where mistakes are occurring, but hopefully we will learn from it and with patience and perseverance we will get through to our objective of consolidating a manner of life where human rights are respected, where there is balance, where there is greater sense of responsibility, where there is powersharing, harmony, where there is progress and a good example to present itself to others in this entire region. We are totally committed to this course and we will continue to do our best to see that this period is a period of consolidation, of adjustment and that the future is in that direction. I can't predict what and when we will have changes but I believe very soon hopefully the National Charter will translate itself into



facts in our lives..." The King urged Arab leaders in the region to overcome their differences and unite to build for a future based on cooperation and democratic reform. "It could be a golden age for this entire area if we complement each other and try to build for an effective future instead of live in suspicion and fear and continue to have complexes over border problems that have to be resolved. "If we lose this chance, years from now, when the area is not as important as it is for the rest of the world, what do we do?" he asked.

U.N. vote upstages peace talks in media

Special from Washington

TUESDAY'S U.S. press coverage of the Middle East peace talks was upstaged by front-page reports on the U.N. General Assembly's repeal of the "Zionism is racism" resolution. The Washington Post led with John Goshko's report on the repeal, while the Philadelphia Inquirer ran Mr. Goshko's story with a large, full-page headline. A New York Times editorial diverged from the celebratory mood of most of the reports, and launched an attack on the Arab states who voted against repeal: "The city is that most Arab states, including those ostensibly seeking peace with Israel, voted yet once again to impugn the very birthright of the Jewish state." Reports noted Deputy Secretary of State Lawrence Eagleburger's assertion that rescinding the resolution was "not linked to the peace process." Foreign Minister David Levy's caution that Israel is still reluctant to allow a greater U.N. role in the peace process. Reports on the future to resolve the impasse over the status of the Palestinian negotiators, as the Israelis rejected a Palestinian-Jordanian compromise proposal, noted a darker mood and sharpening of attacks by the Palestinians and Israelis. All reports highlighted Israeli spokesperson Benjamin Netanyahu's remark that Monday had "not been a good day for peace," and Palestinian spokesperson Hanan Ashrawi's comment that the "whole process is in serious jeopardy."

Syria, Iran and PLO assail U.N. vote; Israel jubilant

DAMASCUS (AP) — Syria, Iran and the Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) reacted furiously Tuesday to a United Nations vote repealing a 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism. A Syrian government newspaper called the 111-25 vote Monday a "blow to freedom" and the PLO called it a "grave act that impedes the peace process." Tehran Radio said the move underscored U.S. domination of the United Nations and its effort to reward Israel for agreeing to talk peace with the Arabs. The English-language Tehran Times said in an editorial published Wednesday: "The consequence has been to transfer the symbolic stain cast on Israel to the U.N. General Assembly itself, and one wonders where it will lead." In Lebanon, one newspaper suggested the vote was a dangerous precedent that could be followed by abrogation of resolutions seeking return to Israeli-occupied territories. Israeli President Chaim Herzog said Tuesday the United Nations "removed a shameful blot upon

its good name" by repealing the resolution. "It of course symbolises the revolution in the world order that has occurred since those dark days when the resolution was passed," added Mr. Herzog, who was Israel's U.N. ambassador when the General Assembly passed the resolution. Palestinian leader Faisal Husseini said Tuesday the vote to repeal the resolution "is completely missing the point" because it does not address Israeli repression of the Palestinian people and (Israel's) denial of their national rights, foremost that of self-determination, is racist in essence," Mr. Husseini said in a statement. Mr. Husseini said government backing for Jewish settlers taking over homes in Arab Jerusalem shows how poorly Israel treats Palestinians. Elsewhere in the Middle East, there was little reaction to the vote, taken well after the deadline of most newspapers. Official

'Returnees should be an issue in negotiations'

AMMAN (J.T.) — Jordan wants the plight of Palestinians displaced from Kuwait in the wake of the Gulf crisis to be on the agenda of the current Middle East peace talks, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan said Tuesday. "It does seem appropriate to place the issue of mass displacement firmly in this wide international arena, for it would thereby be accorded the importance and exposure that it both requires and deserves," the Prince told roundtable at Evian les Bains, France. The roundtable, on the movements of people in the 1990s, is organised by the U.N. High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). In his address, delivered on his behalf, Prince Hassan listed four factors which he said made the impact of this return of hundreds of thousands to Jordan particularly severe. He said that those returning to Jordan "included a large proportion of dependents bringing with them all their human needs and wants." This, he said, "placed tremendous strain upon both the private and public welfare services in the country." Prince Hassan said that "a high proportion of the returnees to the Kingdom had been born and brought up abroad with limited links with little direct experience of Jordan." This means that most of the displaced cannot be said to be returning to a homeland that they know, Prince Hassan observed. He said that a third factor relates to the Kingdom's ordeal of having to cope with several human waves within a short space of time. "The exodus in anticipation of war that occurred in the period after the invasion of Kuwait in 1990 and the flight from Kuwait afterwards were the times of greatest strain for Jordan," he noted. Furthermore, it has to be pointed out that Jordan accommodates the highest proportion of refugees to indigenous population in the world at a time when the Kingdom is being beset by economic difficulties created before the mass return of the displaced people, the Prince noted. He said nearly "one in

Moscow government to cease to exist in 2 weeks

MOSCOW (AP) — Boris Yeltsin and Mikhail Gorbachev agreed Tuesday to dissolve the central Soviet government within two weeks, and both the Kremlin and state bank will be transferred to Russian jurisdiction, Soviet media reported. The Russian and Soviet presidents met privately for two hours in the Kremlin, the red brick fortress along the Moscow River that has been the heart of power. Mr. Yeltsin's spokesman, Pavel Voshchanov, said they agreed that the Soviet Union will stop functioning by Jan. 1 and be replaced by Mr. Yeltsin's new commonwealth of independent states, the independent Interfax news agency reported. The meeting came just one day after Mr. Yeltsin, the president of Russia, and Mr. Gorbachev, president of the collapsing Soviet central government, held talks with visiting Secretary of State James Baker. Mr. Baker continued to meet the heads of

Soviet republics on Tuesday, flying to Kirgizia and Kazakhstan. (See page 8) Mr. Yeltsin told Mr. Baker during their meeting Monday that Russia will seek the Soviet Union's "vacant" seat in the United Nations and on the U.N. Security Council. Earlier, Mr. Gorbachev's spokesman had said the Soviet leader will accept the new commonwealth once the parliaments of participating republics ratify it, and then will decide his own role. Mr. Gorbachev has said he would resign if a majority of the 12 remaining Soviet republics joined the commonwealth, instead of preserving the central government he favours. Mr. Yeltsin told the Tuesday edition of the Rome-based daily La Repubblica that he sees no role for Mr. Gorbachev in the new commonwealth, and that the Soviet president should resign by mid-January.

Iraq rejects U.N. blame for war

NICOSIA (AP) — Iraq Tuesday rejected a United Nations charge holding it responsible for starting the eight-year war with Iran. The Iraqi News Agency (INA) quoted an unidentified Foreign Ministry spokesman blaming Iraq for starting the war by shelling Iraqi towns and villages on Sept. 4, 1980. The war is deemed to have started with an Iraqi invasion of Iran on Sept. 22. U.N. Secretary-General Javier Perez de Cuellar issued a statement last week blaming Iraq for the conflict. This sparked a statement by Iranian Vice-President Hassan Habibi on Monday demanding the payment of war reparations. The statement by the Iraqi spokesman appeared to be a direct response to Mr. Habibi. INA quoted the spokesman as saying Iranian officials "know very well that they themselves started the aggression against Iraq as they bombed with heavy artillery Iraq's towns and villages on Sept. 4, 1980, carried on the war against Iraq, and then rejected just peace based on international legality and snubbed the U.N. Security Council's authority." The spokesman added that Iraq, "while resisting aggression, had accepted the first U.N. Security Council Resolution 479 (on the Iran-Iraq war), on Sept. 28, 1980," which had called for a ceasefire. "If the Iranian regime is ready for peace, Iraq is also ready," the spokesman added. Iraq returns body

Iraq has returned the body of former Iranian Oil Minister Mohammad Tondgouyvan who Iran said was killed by Iraqis after being taken prisoner early in the 1980-88 war between the two countries. Officials of the International Committee of the Red Cross supervised Tuesday's handover and the body was flown by helicopter to the western Iranian city of

Repeal of 3379 will not affect talks — analysts

By Serene Halasa Special to the Jordan Times AMMAN — The General Assembly's vote on Monday to repeal a 1975 resolution equating Zionism with racism will not have any direct effect on the ongoing Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington, Jordanian analysts and observers maintain. According to many interviewed by the Jordan Times Tuesday, the decision to repeal the resolution, at a time when the Israelis and Arabs are meeting in the American capital, will not hamper the talks between the two sides. But it might "increase the tension and mistrust between them," as one observer put it. Those interviewed also agreed that the reason and the timing behind the American-led campaign to rescind Resolution 3379 was part of an Israeli "pre-condition" to enter the peace process. Furthermore, the decision to revoke the resolution was aimed at "appeasing" the Israeli side, they said. The U.S. was nearly ready to push for the repeal in 1990, but decided against it in the wake of

the Gulf crisis so as not to offend Arab members in the Western-Arab coalition formed to drive Iraq out of Kuwait. "I don't think that the decision to repeal the resolution will have any direct effect on the ongoing peace talks in Washington because both sides have come to these talks despite their will," said Taher Hikmat, a renowned lawyer and former minister. "The fact that it was done at this time is bound to increase tension and diminish U.S. credibility." Safwan Bataineh, an economist and columnist, said that revoking the resolution "will not do anything to change the intransigent position of the Israeli government which has always been accustomed to a take-only relationship with the West." Naser Tahboub, a political science professor at the University of Jordan, said that a number of factors contributed to the fact that an overwhelming majority voted to repeal the resolution. These factors include the state of the Arab World in the post-Gulf war period, the absence of a bipolar system, the strength of

Confidence vote pushes crisis to backburner

Confidence vote pushes crisis to backburner

By Lami K. Andoni Jordan Times Staff Reporter AMMAN — The vote of confidence in the government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker Monday seems to have diffused the crisis between the legislative and executive branches of government which has narrowed the Jordanian political scene over the last three months. Yet the fact that 27 deputies out of 80 casted a negative vote in the cabinet and a reading of the speeches delivered by the deputies indicate that peace talks with Israel and the debate over political freedoms could still raise future conflicts between the government and Parliament. In his response to the Lower House Sharif Zeid made it clear that Jordan remained committed to the peace talks but will not accept a settlement that will compromise Jordan's sovereignty or the Palestinian national rights. He also pledged to pursue steps that will consolidate the democratisation process. Sharif Zeid's assurances are not

expected to change the headline position of the opponents of the peace talks, especially the Muslim Brotherhood. His implied declaration that Jordan shall not succumb to economic and political pressure, however, is expected to tone down the tension arising from public scepticism over the direction of the peace negotiations. Judging by the voting pattern, and the deputies' speeches there are two forms of opposition to the peace process in the Parliament: — A categorical opposition to the idea of talks with Israel, voiced by the Brotherhood, leftist deputies Fakhr Kassar, Mansour Mourad and Hosni Shihab and Arab nationalist parliamentarians. — Opposition to the terms of the current peace talks that characterise the attitude of some prominent leftist deputies. Sharif Zeid's reaffirmation of the government's unwillingness to compromise will definitely help in bringing about a smoother relationship between the cabinet and the left,

according to analysts. Yet this relationship will highly depend on the course of the peace process and how concrete the official Jordanian position remains throughout the talks, the analysts maintain. The Brotherhood, which reiterated its outright rejection of the talks, has toned down its language and avoided direct attacks on the government. The Brotherhood's position indicates that the movement will avoid any tense relationship with the new government, unlike its attitude towards the government of former Prime Minister Taker Al Masi. The conservative Constitution Bloc, which joined forces with the Brotherhood last October in a call for Mr. Masi's resignation, has granted the vote of confidence as expected because it is a partner in the government and since its position is motivated by the power struggle over influence in the cabinet rather than by specific political issues. According to analysts, Sharif Zeid has sought to accommodate the conservatives in an attempt to diffuse the

increasing tension between Parliament and the executive. In the view of sources close to the cabinet Mr. Masi has erred in taking steps that alienated the traditional constitutionalists. Other political observers, argue that Mr. Masi was trying to establish a new tradition that broaden political participation. Mr. Masi resigned last month after failing to secure the full backing of his main organised allies, the Jordan Arab National Democratic Alliance (JANDA), a coalition of leftists, nationalists and liberals, after he could not deliver a complete repeal of martial law. The new cabinet will face the same challenge, the observers argue, as demands for the repeal of martial law are expected to continue. Therefore, steps towards removing all restrictions on political freedoms and paving the way for political pluralism remain, in the view of political

Little chance of quick easing of Iraq sanctions, U.N. official indicates

Baghdad has not complied with Gulf war ceasefire conditions so far, Ekeus asserts

By P.V. Vivekanand
Jordan Times Staff Reporter

AMMAN — There is little chance of any easing of the international sanctions imposed against Iraq after its August 1990 invasion of Kuwait unless and until Baghdad discloses what international inspectors believe to be remaining secrets of its nuclear weapons programme and details of its stocks of ballistic missiles, a senior U.N. official indicated Tuesday.

"We know that they (Iraq) are concealing a major component of their nuclear weapons programme," said Rolf Ekeus, head of the U.N. special commission entrusted with eliminating Iraq's weapons of mass destruction under Security Council Resolution 687 adopted in April this year.

The resolution, which laid down U.N. terms and conditions for formally ending the Gulf war over Kuwait, "linked Iraqi demonstration of good behaviour in the area of cooperating with the U.N. in destroying its weapons of mass destruction," Mr. Ekeus told a satellite press conference monitored in Amman.

"Iraq has so far not complied with that resolution," said the Swedish diplomat. "And the (Security) Council has decided that as long as Iraq is not complying the economic sanctions will remain in force," he said in answer to questions from journalists based in Cairo, Sanaa, New Delhi and Riyadh.

The essence of the U.N. official's confident comments underlined the vulnerability and overwhelming pressure that Iraq finds itself exposed to in the aftermath of the Gulf war.

Asked whether a formula could be found to ease the deteriorating food and health situation of the Iraqi people as a result of the international embargo, Mr. Ekeus described as "generous" a U.N. Sanctions Committee decision to "allow" Iraq to sell \$1.6 billion in oil — "most of which is spent on buying food and medicine" — and blamed Iraq for not accepting the "offer."

International experts and U.N. officials say that Iraq would be fortunate if it receives a net \$800 million from the oil sales since the proceeds will be channelled through a U.N. committee, which will set aside 30 per cent for war reparations and as yet undisclosed amount to support U.N. ceasefire monitoring operations as well as to pay for the elimination of Iraq's weapons.

The estimated \$800 million will not be sufficient to feed Iraq's 18 million people for a period more than two months, experts say.

Baghdad, saying the limited one-time sale of oil will be a violation of its sovereignty, has refused to accept the U.N. decision and is demanding that the West unfreeze Iraq's estimated \$4 billion in bank accounts and assets frozen as part of the U.N. punitive measure imposed after the invasion of Kuwait.

"According to Mr. Ekeus, who obviously took extreme care to limit his comments to strictly within the realm of the mandate given to the commission, the Security Council resolutions on the Gulf crisis have nothing to do with the 'question of leadership in Iraq'."

The resolutions "concentrate on the importance of eliminating weapons of mass destruction ...

(and are) enforced, inter alia, to compel Iraq to go along with the resolutions," he said. "Iraq is treated as an entity and member of the U.N."

The United States and Britain, the two de facto leaders of the Security Council, have repeatedly said that the sanctions against Iraq will remain in place as long as President Saddam Hussein remains in power.

Mr. Ekeus said the commission he heads wants to ensure that all weapons-producing and research capabilities of Iraq are eliminated and that Iraq will not be able to reacquire them at any point.

In a witty and unwitting tribute to the innovative nature of Iraq, Mr. Ekeus accused Baghdad of "systematic concealment" its nuclear programme from international agencies and asserted that the record of the country had proved that if it regains a "good financial condition," then it would be very easy for it to "combine the resources and human knowledge" to reacquire its military capabilities.

Towards foiling such a course of events, he explained, the commission has adopted a two-track approach: One aimed at removing all "remnants" of Iraq's weapons and research facilities and the other involving monitoring measures which will govern all future research and chemical industries in the country.

The Iraqi authorities are cooperating well in the process of destroying the facilities and material Baghdad has declared to the U.N. committee, he said. "We have no complaints in this regard."

But U.N. inspectors are seeking statistics on the number of Scud missiles Iraq used in the 1980-88 war with Iran to establish whether Iraq is concealing any more of the long-range missiles of the type it used to pound Israel and Saudi Arabia during the war over Kuwait this year.

The commission, which has paid 24 "major inspection visits" and numerous other missions to Iraq after the war, knows "roughly how many (Scuds) have been delivered (to Iraq) over the years from the Soviet Union" and how many it used during the recent war, Mr. Ekeus said.

"We don't have any figures on how many were used in the Iran-Iraq war. We are trying to figure that out so that we know exactly whether there are any missiles left. We have concern that some may still be left in Iraq and we are continuing our efforts."

Asked when he expected his mission to be completed, the Swedish diplomat blamed Iraq for placing "obstacles," and said: "We cannot say that the teeth have been pulled from the Iraqi nuclear programme. Iraq has not disclosed the extent of (its nuclear) programme and we find that there is a tendency on the part of the Iraqi authorities to save what is possible."

"We'd like to report to the Security Council soon as possible that they (Iraq) have mapped out everything, (and) now we are on the track of destroying the material and production capabilities. But Iraq is not forthcoming. I've told them if they open up their secrets, their hiding places and rest of the missiles programme — this is a matter of a month, a couple of months."

The conditional optimism that was inherent here was missing in comments Mr. Ekeus made at various other points during the

satellite press conference, which was monitored at the American Cultural Centre by the United States Information Service in Amman.

In general terms, he said: "Iraq had advanced research and production facilities for chemical weapons for offensive purposes. About 46,000 pieces of filled ammunition — nerve gas and mustard gas — and 75,000 to 80,000 unfilled ammunition were found and 11,000 of latter category have already been destroyed."

"To destroy those filled ammunition is very dangerous, very complex with a very high-risk component for the personnel involved," he said. "It is also something we have to sort out in cooperation with Iraqi authorities. In this area the Iraqi government is quite forthcoming ... but it is a huge task."

Experts have estimated that the job of destroying Iraq's chemical weapons could not be completed before mid-1993, implying that the option was open to the Security Council to maintain the sanctions against Iraq until the total elimination of Iraq's arsenal in line with the technical language of the related resolution.

"U.N. teams have found 'facilities for advanced research' for biological weapons — 'we have identified the programme and identified those who worked in it' — but no indication of an active production programme. 'We hope there is no active production programme,' Mr. Ekeus said.

According to Mr. Ekeus, the Iraqis had removed a "major" part of documents related to its nuclear weapons programme immediately before U.N. inspectors visited the offices of the Iraqi Nuclear Energy Commission in September. The inspection, coupled with a U.N. demand for documents found in the building, led to a three-day stand-off at a Baghdad parking lot, he recalled.

He said in addition to the documents that the Iraqis allegedly removed from the building, the U.N. team was also deprived of a part of documents that they actually saw in the building.

Judging from the documents that were available to the team, Mr. Ekeus said, experts established the existence of a nuclear programme of a much larger magnitude than expected and now the committee is demanding that Iraq hand over the entire set of documents, including those allegedly removed as well as those "held back" from the team.

"They have been trying in various ways to enrich uranium to weapon-grade and quality for a bomb," he said. "Iraq had a large programme to acquire the technology and engineering skill in order to put together a trigger package for the bomb and had also started research work on delivery systems."

"What the U.N. has managed to do so far is stop that development and identify the major part of that programme," he said. "We believe that we have done that. We are now in the process of removing nuclear material from Iraq and the production material will be destroyed."

Mr. Ekeus said the plans that the committee has drawn up for Iraq include close monitoring of every aspect of chemical research conducted in Iraq — including facilities producing immunisation vaccines for babies.

Kurds starting to return home, UNHCR says

BAGHDAD (R) — Kurdish refugees displaced by recent fighting are starting to come down from the mountains of northern Iraq, a U.N. official said Tuesday.

"A significant movement seems to be starting again," Panos Moutzidis, information officer for the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, (UNHCR), told Reuters. He said about 4,000 people, encouraged by a lull in fighting between Iraqi troops and Kurdish guerrillas, moved down from the towns of Penjwin and Said Sadiq last week to escape bitter mountain cold.

The U.N. has been feeding, clothing and sheltering hundreds of thousands of Kurds since a post-Gulf war rebellion against Baghdad failed in March.

About 200,000 Kurds fled fresh Iraqi army attacks in the past month, many taking sanctuary in muddy refugee camps around Penjwin, the United Nations says.

"There are no reports and no evidence of shelling. This might have encouraged people to go back to their homes," Mr. Moutzidis said.

He said many of the 3,742 who went home were carried by U.N. trucks.

Relief workers say Pneumonia and other respiratory diseases are increasing in the camps, where children go barefoot in mud and freezing rain.

Iraq said on Sunday that more than 6,000 Kurds had returned to the oil city of Kirkuk following the lifting of emergency measures imposed after its army crushed the rebellion in March.

UNHCR could not confirm the figure but said some people were moving back to Kirkuk.

Mr. Moutzidis said another 1,000 Kurdish refugees had returned from Iran, almost 500 of them through the northern province of Erbil, but 100,000 remained on the Iranian side of the border.

"The Iraqi government has recently made several goodwill gestures to encourage Kurdish leaders to sign an autonomy agreement aimed at ending a stand-off between guerrillas and Iraqi government troops."

It has lifted long-time restrictions banning Kurds from acquiring property in Kirkuk and has dropped a requirement that members of the Kurds' local parliament demonstrate allegiance to the ruling Baath Party.

U.N. officials say there is no sign that Baghdad has lifted a food and fuel blockade imposed on the north to put pressure on negotiations.

In Beirut an Iraqi opposition group said on Tuesday that the world's highest-ranking Shiite Muslim scholar was gravely ill and accused Iraq of denying him special medical treatment.

In a statement issued in Beirut, the Supreme Council of the Islamic Revolution in Iraq (SCIRI), said Grand Ayatollah Abolqasem Ali Khoei's health had deteriorated since Friday. Ayatollah Khoei lives in the southern Iraqi holy city of Najaf.

SCIRI said Ayatollah Khoei's illness was unable to diagnose the doctor so asked for a foreign medical team to examine the scholar. Iraqi authorities refused and sent more security men to surround Ayatollah Khoei's house, it asserted.

SCIRI said Ayatollah Khoei, who is over 90, was vomiting and suffered from intestinal pain.

U.N. vote to repeal 1975 Zionism resolution

UNITED NATIONS (R) — A 1975 General Assembly resolution declaring Zionism to be a form of racism was repealed on Monday by 111 votes in favour, 25 against, with 13 abstentions.

In 1975, the vote was 72 in favour, 35 against and 32 abstentions.

Following is a list of how states voted in Monday's poll and which nations switched their votes compared to 1975.

In favour of repeal (111 nations): Albania, Antigua-Barbuda, Argentina, Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Barbados, Belarus, Belgium, Belize, Benin, Bhutan, Bolivia, Botswana, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Cambodia, Cameroon, Canada, Cape Verde, Central African Republic, Chile, Colombia, Congo, Costa Rica, Ivory Coast, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Dominica, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Estonia, Fiji, Finland, France, Gabon, Gambia, Germany, Greece, Grenada, Guatemala, Guyana, Haiti, Honduras,

Hungary, Iceland, India, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Japan and Kenya.

Also, Latvia, Lesotho, Liberia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Madagascar, Malawi, Maldives, Marshall Islands, Mexico, Micronesia, Mongolia, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Nicaragua, Nigeria, Norway, Panama, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, the Philippines, Poland, Portugal, South Korea, Romania, Rwanda, St. Kitts and Nevis, St. Lucia, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Samoa, Sao Tome and Principe, Seychelles, Sierra Leone, Singapore, Solomon Islands, Spain, Suriname, Swaziland, Sweden, Thailand, Togo, Ukraine, the Soviet Union, Britain, the United States, Uruguay, Venezuela, Yugoslavia, Zaire and Zambia.

Against repeal (25 nations): Afghanistan, Algeria, Bangladesh, Brunei, Cuba, North Korea, Indonesia, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Lebanon, Libya, Malaysia, Mali, Mauritania, Pakistan,

Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Somalia, Sri Lanka, Sudan, Syria, the United Arab Emirates, Vietnam and Yemen.

Abstentions (13 nations): Angola, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Ghana, Laos, Maldives, Mauritius, Myanmar (Burma), Trinidad and Tobago, Turkey, Uganda, Tanzania and Zimbabwe.

Absent or not participating: Bahrain, Chad, China, Comoros, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kuwait, Laos, Maldives, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Senegal, South Africa (suspended from the General Assembly since 1974), Tunisia and Vanuatu.

Thirty Nations who supported the 1975 resolution equating Zionism with Racism Monday switched positions in favour of repeal (the General Assembly in 1975 had 142 members compared to 166 today).

They are: Albania, Brazil, Bulgaria, Burundi, Belarus, Cambodia, Cameroon, Cape Verde, Congo, Cyprus, Czechoslovakia,

Benin, Gambia, Grenada, Guyana, Hungary, India, Madagascar, Malta, Mexico, Mongolia, Mozambique, Nigeria, Romania, Portugal, Rwanda, Sao Tome and Principe, Ukraine, the Soviet Union and Yugoslavia.

Another 18 nations who voted in favour of 1975 resolution either abstained or did not participate in Monday's vote for repeal. They are: Bahrain, Chad, China, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kuwait, Laos, Maldives, Morocco, Niger, Oman, Senegal, Tunisia, Turkey, Uganda and Tanzania.

And a third group of 27 states who abstained or did not take part in the 1975 vote switched in favour of repeal on Monday. They are: Argentina, Bhutan, Botswana, Chile, Colombia, Ecuador, Gabon, Greece, Guatemala, Jamaica, Japan, Kenya, Lesotho, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Paraguay, Peru, Philippines, Romania, Sierre Leone, Singapore, Spain, Thailand, Togo, Venezuela, Zaire and Zambia.

Kabul steps up overtures to former Afghan monarch

KABUL (AP) — President Najibullah's government has stepped up overtures to the former king of Afghanistan, trying to get him to come home after 18 years in exile and help restore peace to this war-torn country.

The former king, Zahir Shah, was overthrown by a cousin, Mohammad Daoud, in 1973 while in Italy for medical treatment.

Mr. Daoud, often blamed for opening the door to the communists, was ousted five years later in a bloody palace coup that installed a government sympathetic to Moscow.

The Soviet Union is preparing to end military involvement in Afghanistan on Jan. 1 and Zahir Shah is increasingly mentioned in Afghanistan as the only Afghan with enough stature to lead a transitional government that could one day oversee national elections.

The 77-year-old former monarch kept silent vigil in his villa near Rome as the Soviet-backed government battled U.S.-supported rebels for more than 13 years. The fighting has left at least 1.5 million Afghans dead,

more than three million maimed or wounded and five million more in exile in Pakistan and Iran.

For many Afghans, only Zahir Shah can rally most of their countrymen to peace. But this time he would return home not as Zahir Shah, the former king, but as Zahir Khan, the commoner.

"The reason this war has lasted 13 years has been because of the lack of unity. Afghans need solid leadership during a transitional period, someone who can unify the nation. And the most popular person in Afghanistan today is the former king," said Zia Nassry, an Afghan who heads a New York-based umbrella group representing Afghans in the United States and Europe and supporters of the ex-king in Afghanistan.

Mr. Nassry returned home last month after 20 years and plans to lead a pro-king demonstration on Dec. 28. The government has said peaceful demonstrations are permitted under the constitution and has given its approval.

The rally and march through Kabul's central business district will also mark the 12th anniversary of the Soviet invasion

and the nine-year intervention in Afghanistan by the Red Army.

The last of the 115,000 Soviet soldiers returned home in February 1989.

"We want to express the wish of the silent majority of Afghanistan, the silent who have been the victims of this war," said Mr. Nassry. He declines to give an estimate of how many Afghans are associated with his group.

Mr. Nassry and other royalists in Kabul organised a march last month but police broke up the rally following fights.

The mention of Zahir Shah's name inflames passions on both sides.

Many fondly remember him as reigning over an Afghanistan at peace. Others say that in four decades in power he did nothing to help Afghans still living in dried mud houses.

The fundamentalist rebels based in Pakistan oppose the king, saying he would restore the feudal monarch that was abolished by his cousin. Some fundamentalist leaders threaten to kill him if he sets foot on Afghan soil again.

Even American backers of the rebels express doubt about the king, saying they are suspicious about the ambitions of some of his close aides and relatives.

The possibility of Zahir Shah's return was brought to the fore following the agreement in mid-September by the United States and the Soviet Union to stop all weapons shipments to their warring clients by Jan. 1.

Within days, Mr. Najibullah restored Zahir Shah's citizenship — revoked following the 1978 coup — and said he and his family could return home anytime.

The invitation has been repeated several times since.

Supporters of Zahir Shah say there is no way he will return as long as Mr. Najibullah and his Watan (Homeland) party hold power.

"If he insists on remaining as president the former king will not come," said Mohammad Asghar, justice minister under Zahir Shah and now chief of the pro-monarchist National Salvation Society.

But government and diplomatic sources say there have been contacts between the former king and the Kabul government in the past year.

MIDDLE EAST NEWS IN BRIEF

2 killed, 16 wounded in Kuwait blast

KUWAIT CITY (AP) — Two Kuwaitis were killed and sixteen wounded when a piece of ordnance left behind by the Iraqi army exploded after two young men lifted it and threw it on the ground, the ministry of information said Tuesday. Hundreds of Kuwaitis have been wounded by unexploded ordnance littering the country since the Gulf war. Health Minister Abdul Wahab Al-Fawzan said recently that hospitals are still getting two to three cases a day of injuries caused by ordnance.

PLO leader to visit China this week

PEKING (AP) — Palestine Liberation Organisation (PLO) leader Yasser Arafat is scheduled to arrive in China Thursday for an official visit, the Foreign Ministry announced Tuesday. The announcement, carried by the state-run Xinhua news agency, said Chinese President Yang Shangkun had invited Mr. Arafat to visit China. The report did not say how long Mr. Arafat would be in China. Xinhua gave no details on the purpose of the visit, but Mr. Arafat is expected to discuss Middle East peace negotiations under way in Washington and China's increasing contacts and exchanges with Israel. China and Israel, which do not have diplomatic relations, have recently increased contacts, raising speculation that preparations are being made to establish formal links. Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy said last week that Israel and China are "marching towards the establishment of diplomatic ties." Israeli Defence Minister Moshe Arens came to Peking on a secret trip in November, becoming the first Israeli cabinet member to visit China. China has strong ties with most Arab states and the PLO. In late November, Premier Li Peng sent a message to the Palestinians that the sovereignty and security of Israel should be guaranteed. China has said in the past it will not normalise relations with Israel until the Jewish state withdraws from the occupied Arab territories. Mr. Arafat has visited China several times. His last official visit to China was in October 1989. During that visit, China gave Mr. Arafat full honours as a visiting head of state. China was one of the first countries to recognise the Palestinian state and Mr. Arafat's role as president of it. Most Western nations do not recognise a Palestinian state.

Iran says former oil minister died in Iraq

NICOSIA (R) — Iran said Tuesday its former Oil Minister Mohammad Javad Tongdougay, captured early in the 1980-88 Iran-Iraq war, had died in captivity in Iraq. Iranian radio said the former minister's body was due to be brought to Iran later in the day. The Iranian news agency IRNA earlier quoted an Oil Ministry official as saying Mr. Tongdougay's wife and his former deputy went to Iraq to identify the body. The IRNA report, monitored in Nicosia, did not refer to the circumstances of Mr. Tongdougay's death but the radio said the former minister was killed by Iraqi forces. Until earlier this year, Iran made repeated calls for Mr. Tongdougay's release, saying the only Iranian minister taken prisoner by Iraq during the eight-year war was alive. Mr. Tongdougay and several other Oil Ministry officials were captured by Iraqi soldiers while inspecting oil installations in the southwestern Khuzestan province which Iraq invaded in September, 1980. Among those captured with Mr. Tongdougay was his deputy, Mohsen Yahyavi, who identified his body in Iraq. Mr. Yahyavi was freed last year after Iraq withdrew from Iran and agreed to swap thousands of prisoners-of-war.

Demjanjuk says he thinks he will be freed

CLEVELAND (AP) — A former autoworker given the death sentence by an Israeli court for atrocities committed in World War II said in a telephone interview from prison that he believes he will be exonerated. John Demjanjuk, formerly a suburban Cleveland, was convicted by the Israeli court in 1988, accused of being "Ivan the Terrible," a guard at the Treblinka concentration camp in wartime Poland. Sentenced to death, Mr. Demjanjuk has an appeal pending before the Israeli supreme court. Survivors from the camp identified Mr. Demjanjuk as the guard Ivan. But Demjanjuk and his defenders, including U.S. Congressman James Traficant, an Ohio Democrat, have said he is a victim of mistaken identity. Mr. Traficant has said he has new evidence that he believes can show Mr. Demjanjuk is innocent but has refused to elaborate. In a telephone interview with WJW-TV in Ohio, Mr. Demjanjuk said Monday he hopes to be freed soon. "I think now you've got the proof," Mr. Demjanjuk said, also without elaborating. "I tell you, if there's truth in the court, I should be coming home," he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel: 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

18:00 Le Moud et Vous
19:00 News in French
19:15 Documentary
19:30 News in Hebrew
20:00 News in Arabic
2:30 Kate and Alice
7:15 Voice at the Planet
7:20 News in English
7:30 Law and Order

PRAYER TIMES

04:54 Fajr
06:16 (Sunrise) Duha
11:24 Dhuhr
14:12 'Asr
16:36 Maghrib
17:58 'Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church Swedish, Tel. 810740
Assemblies of God Church, Tel. 637265
St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590
Church of the Annunciation Tel. 637440
De la Salle Church Tel. 661757
Terrence Church Tel. 623666

Church of the Annunciation Tel. 623541
Anglican Church Tel. 625383, Tel. 628543
Armenian Catholic Church Tel. 771331
Armenian Orthodox Church Tel. 775261
St. Ephraim Church Tel. 771751
Armenian Lutheran Church Tel. 685326
Evangelical Lutheran Church Tel. 811255
The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints Tel. 823824, 654932
Church of the Nazarene Tel. 675691

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology.
It will be fair and winds will be easterly moderate. In Agaba, winds will be northerly moderate and seas calm.

Min./max. temp.

Amman 4/12
Agaba 7/20
Djessra -3/12
Jordan Valley 8/18

Yesterday's high temperature: Amman 11, Agaba 19. Humidity reading: Amman 64 per cent, Agaba 30 per cent.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY

AMMAN:
Dr. Basma Qaidoun 646024
Dr. Abdul Majed Shahr 791405
Dr. Ahmad Suleiman 752118
Dr. Abdul Aziz Taboun 783708
Finn pharmacy 661912
Finn pharmacy 783636
Al Asma pharmacy 637055
Nasrallah pharmacy 623672
Al Salam pharmacy 636730
Yacoub pharmacy 644945
Shmeisat pharmacy 637660

BEIRUT:
Dr. Ahmad Abu Baker (-)
Al Shura pharmacy (275825)

ZARQA:
Dr. Hassan Hyman (-)
Khatfah pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111
Civil Defence Department 661111
Civil Defence Immediate 630411
Rescue 199
Civil Defence Emergency 199
Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777
Fire Brigade 891228
Blood Bank 751211
Highway Police 843402
Traffic Police 894390
Public Security Department 63021
Hotel Complaints 608800
Police Complaints 661176
Water and Sewerage 897467
Ammann Municipality 781111
Complaints 781111
Telephone Information 121
(directory assistance) 121
Overseas Calls 010230
Central Amman Telephone 63101
Repairs 661101
Jordan Television 771111
Radio Jordan 771111
Water Authority 680100

HOSPITALS

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615
Electric Power 636381
RJ Flight Information 08-53200
Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200
Zarqa National Hospital (09)980560
Ibn Sina Hospital (09)980732
Al Hikma Modern Hospital (09)990990
BIBHS:
Princess Basma Hospital (02)275555
Greek Catholic Hospital (02)272775
Ibn Al Nafaa Hospital (02)247100
AQABA:
Princess Haya Hospital (03)314111

FOR THE TRAVELLER

QUEEN ALIA INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

This information is supplied by Royal Jordanian (RJ) information department at the Queen Alia International Airport. Tel. (09)33200-5, where it should always be verified.

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights (Terminal 1)

09:00 Damascus (RJ)
09:30 Jeddah (RJ)
09:30 Dhahran (RJ)
09:30 Larana (RJ)
09:55 Dubai, Abu Dhabi (RJ)
10:00 New York, Amsterdam (RJ)
10:00 Istanbul (RJ)
10:00 Madrid, Rome (RJ)
10:00 Paris, Geneva (RJ)
10:15 London, Brussels (RJ)
10:15 Vienna, Frankfurt (RJ)
21:45 Agaba (RJ)
Other Flights (Terminal 2)
09:30 Cairo (MS)
12:00 Sanaa (YV)
12:00 Baghdad (LN)
20:30 Karachi (PK)
11:00 Istanbul (RJ)
11:10 Tunis, Casablanca (RJ)
11:30 Amsterdam, New York (RJ)
11:45 London (RJ)
19:15 Agaba (RJ)
19:30 Colombo (RJ)
19:45 Cairo (RJ)
20:10 New Delhi (RJ)
20:10 Riyadh (RJ)
20:30 Abu Dhabi, Dubai (RJ)
22:00 Calcutta, Bangkok (RJ)
22:45 Sanaa (RJ)

Other Flights (Terminal 2)

09:15 Beirut (MS)
10:25 Cairo (MS)
13:00 Sanaa (YV)
14:00 Baghdad (LN)
21:20 Karachi (PK)

MARKET PRICES

Upstater price in the per kg
Apple 600/50
Banana 300/40
Banana (Malakam) 350/300
Beans 850/600
Cabbage 160/120
Carrot

King to honour winning athletes

AMMAN (J.T.) — Distinguished Jordanian athletes and sportsmen will be honoured by His Majesty King Hussein at a special ceremony to be held at Al Hussein Youth City today.

Those to be honoured are Jordanian athletes who excelled in their performance at Arab, Asian and international games and championships performing individually or within groups according to the Ministry of Youth.

Among those to be honoured at the ceremony will be athletes who won the gold, silver and bronze medals in the international and Arab championships held in the 1990-91 sports season. The ministry said that the team of athletes which won one of three championships in these games also will be honoured.



ROYAL VISIT — His Majesty King Hussein Tuesday visited the General Command of the Jordanian Armed Forces where he was received by Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff Field Marshal Fathi Abu Taleb, the chief of staff of the land forces, the chief of staff of the Royal Air Force, several of the chairmen of the joint chiefs

of staff assistants and the inspector general. King Hussein met with Marshal Abu Taleb for a period of time and discussed with him issues of concern to the Armed Forces. King Hussein was accompanied on the visit by His Royal Highness Prince Talal Ben Mohammad, the King's military secretary.

Films to portray plight of Palestinians

By Sana Atiyeh

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — "Far from Home" and "Testimonies of Palestinian Children During Times of War" are the two films that open the week-long Palestinian film festival this evening at Abdul Hamid Shoman Foundation.

The festival focuses on films made by Qais Al Zubeidi, an Iraqi who will discuss the two films with the audience later in the evening.

"This is the first time my films will be screened within a complete programme," Mr. Zubeidi told journalists Tuesday.

His latest documentary film, "A Voice in Deaf Times", portraying Israeli lawyer Felicia Langer who defends Palestinian rights, was broadcast on Jordan Television last week — the only TV station that accepted to air the programme.

"The film could have made it if it weren't for the Gulf war," Mr. Zubeidi said, adding that while he was filming the documentary, the war broke out, and the Palestinian issue and intifada dropped from the top of the ladder to the bottom.

"The Palestinian issue became a taboo to Western television stations," Mr. Zubeidi said. The companies that had shown interest in buying the film while it was being produced refused to take it when it finished, he said.

Jordan Television screened the film on the fourth anniversary of the Palestinian intifada, also Ms. Langer's birthday. Mr. Zubeidi noted that last year on the same day, Dec. 9, the Jewish lawyer had also received the "alternative noble prize."

"She said she considered that broadcasting this film as the most important prize because these people I love and defend saw that I didn't escape from the front," Mr. Zubeidi, quoting Ms. Langer, said. "The telephone calls I received from the West Bank after they had seen the film

was the best gift I received on my birthday," Ms. Langer had said after JTV aired the film. The Jewish lawyer left Israel to protest the Israeli oppression against the Palestinian people in the occupied territories. She moved to Germany where she dedicates her life as a political activist for the Palestinian cause.

Mr. Zubeidi, who is currently residing in Berlin, started his career as a filmmaker in 1969 with his 13-minute documentary "Far From Home" about the daily lives of Palestinians from a refugee camp outside Damascus. Since then, the director has made 15 other films and received awards from Leipzig International Documentary Film Festivals in Germany.

Most of his films are documentaries focusing on the Palestinian people and the cause of Palestine. For several years, Mr. Zubeidi headed the Cinema Section at the Palestine Liberation Organisation's (PLO) Cultural Department.

Shoman Foundation screens six of Mr. Zubeidi's films. On Thursday, three films will be shown: "Confrontation" (1983, 30 minutes), "Chronicle of a massacre" (1984, 30 minutes) and "Homeland of Barbed Wire" (1980, 60 minutes). "Chronicle" is in the English language and "Homeland" is in both Arabic and English.

Mr. Zubeidi's 110-minute documentary, "Palestine — A People's File" (1985) will be screened on Friday.

The Shoman Foundation on Saturday will also show two films made in the Israeli occupied territories: "Palestinian Diary," which was produced by the only Arab production company in the occupied territories, Al Quds for Television production; and "Dar Wa Dour," produced and directed by Rashid Mashharawi, a Palestinian from pre-1967 Palestine.

Entrance fees for each night is JD 1 per person and proceeds go to supporting the intifada. Shows start at 7 p.m.

Minister promises to help Madaba's needy

MADABA (Petra) — Social Development Minister Amin Awad Mashaqbeh Tuesday said that his ministry is keen to develop and improve the social services it provides for citizens, but will do that within its capabilities.

In a tour of Madaba District and Al Mujaqqar and Thiban sub-districts, Dr. Mashaqbeh said the ministry will try to activate its social and voluntary role to benefit the local community and provide the best social services to citizens.

The budget of the National Aid Fund (NAF) as included in the 1992 general budget stands at JD8 million, Dr. Mashaqbeh said. He added that this amount will be distributed to governorates and districts according to the population and the percentage of needy families in each area.

He pointed out that the ministry will work on supporting vocational and income-generating projects because they help to improve the incomes of needy families.

He said the ministry will soon start updating social legislations, including laws pertaining to the NAF, to make them fit the current social situation.

The ministry, he added, will increase the number of beneficiaries from the NAF's assistance in Madaba District, especially in the Bani Hamida area. He also expressed the ministry's readiness to initiate a dress-making project in the Thiban area and proposed that the local centre there serve as the nucleus for such a project.

The minister attended in Thiban sub-district a graduation ceremony of girls who completed the requirements of dress-making, knit-wear, typing and first aid courses and distributed diplomas to the graduates.

Madaba District Governor Masleh Al Tarawneh and Thiban sub-district Governor Samir Shamin delivered speeches at the graduation ceremonies and briefed the minister on the needs of their areas in terms of social services.

Minister calls for clear agricultural policy to boost Jordan's development

IRBID (Petra) — Agricultural development in Jordan is in dire need of a clear strategy that can ensure continued implementation of programmes, said Minister of Agriculture Faysal Khasawneh.

The minister, who was addressing the opening session of the First Jordanian Veterinarians Conference, said that a standing policy in agriculture should not be affected by the change of ministers or other officials regardless of their different views. Such strategy, he said, should be a national policy related to food production, marketing and other areas.

The minister, who stood in for Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, said that Jordan was in need of sustainable agricultural development that can utilise all available resources. This development should be aimed at



Faysal Khasawneh

raising the standard of living of farmers and ensuring increased income from food production, he said.

This policy should also take

into account matters related to the protection of the environment from pollution and strive to ensure a better life for future generations, the minister said in his address to the conference, organised by the Jordanian Veterinarians Association (JVA) in cooperation with the Jordan University of Science and Technology (JUST).

The conference is being held under the slogan: "Veterinary Medicine is One of the Main Tools for Ensuring Food Security" and is aimed at stepping up efforts for the protection and safeguard of human health through improving the livestock wealth, said Dr. Ibrahim Al Abbadi, from the conference's preparatory committee.

He told the opening session that the conference will discuss public health and the health of

domestic animals through 17 research papers submitted by JUST and vets working for the Ministry of Agriculture, the Amman Municipality and the private sector.

Association President Mohammad Teli called for the application of laws and regulations related to the veterinary profession.

Dr. Mahmoud Abu Shihadeh, dean of the Veterinary Medicine Department at JUST, presented an outline about the creation of the department which offers a vital service to the community by producing specialists who can take care of the livestock wealth of Jordan.

Following the opening session, the minister opened an exhibition of veterinary medicines and equipment organised by seven local drug and pharmaceutical companies.

UNICEF to launch its 1992 State of the World Children's Report

AMMAN (J.T.) — The United Nations Children's Fund launches its annual State of the World Children Report (SWCR) 1992 Thursday.

The global launch will take place in Brussels, where UNICEF Executive Director James Grant will release the SWCR in a major press conference.

Here in Jordan, Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker will launch the report Thursday at the same time it is launched globally. On the occasion, Deputy Prime

Minister and Education Minister

Thouqan Al Hindawi and Deputy Director of UNICEF's Regional Office for the Middle East and North Africa Nigel Fisher, who is also UNICEF representative in Jordan, will release the report at a press conference to be held Thursday.

The report, issued by UNICEF Executive Director James P. Grant, highlights the conditions of children worldwide and focuses attention on the plight of children in war-ravaged and debt-

Bank to receive 3 million ECUs loan

AMMAN (J.T.) — The European Investment Bank (EIB) is providing the Industrial Development Bank (IDB) of Jordan, under the Third EEC — Jordan Financial Protocol, with a subsidised global loan for 3 million ECUs, as well as a credit line from risk capital resources for 1 million ECUs.

The proceeds are to finance the setting up of small businesses, particularly private ventures by Jordanian returning from employment in the Gulf area, according to an EEC statement. Both the interest subsidy — 2% — and the credit line from risk capital resources — for a term of 20 years at a highly favourable rate — are being drawn from the General Budget of the European Communities, the statement said.

The creation of new enterprises through this facility is vital in helping the Jordanian economy to weather the repercussions of the Gulf conflict and to cope with the substantial return of expatriates (350,000 in 1991), a sharp fall in remittances from abroad and the loss of major export markets, the statement said.

The IDB, set up in 1965, is one of Jordan's leading financial institutions: geared to funding smaller businesses, it provides technical and administrative assistance in appraising and implementing capital projects.

In recent years, the IDB has attracted over 37 million ECUs in EIB global loans and risk capital assistance for numerous ventures promoted by smaller-scale local firms, especially in the industrial sector, the statement said.

This latest operation is the sixth to be arranged by the EIB under the Third EEC — Jordan Financial Protocol (1988-1991); a total of 51 million ECUs in loans and 2 million ECUs in risk capital assistance.

Candidate hoping to become first female association president

By Odeh Odeh

Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — If things go right for geologist Sara Zeidan, she will become the first woman president of the Jordanian Geologists Association (JGA).

If she succeeds, she will be first woman president of any Jordanian association or union in the Kingdom.

Ms. Zeidan, who heads a splinter group that broke away from the "Greens Bloc" within the JGA, has high hopes for winning the upcoming election early next month.

The Green Bloc, led by Issa Abu Taha, groups six other asso-

ciation members. They are now touring various organisations employing association members to campaign for Mr. Abu Taha, who is also a candidate for the presidency.

Another rival for Ms. Zeidan is the so-called "White Bloc," led by Atallah Band Hassani, who leads a four-member group of geologists.

Ms. Zeidan, along with all candidates, are busily canvassing support from 160 geologists employed by the Natural Resources Authority (NRA), 85 employed at Jordanian universities and up to 150 unemployed geologists as well as those employed by the

Water Authority and the Jordan Phosphates Mines Company.

Each one of the candidates is running with an ambitious platform, but the common denominator among them is their claim that they will be seeking jobs for the 150 unemployed geologists in Jordan.

The candidates' programmes also include the question of privileges and allowances to be given to geologists and a 50 per cent field allowance. The candidates say they are seeking the creation of a special Social Security Fund and health scheme among other benefits for their association members.

Japan to support JEA programme

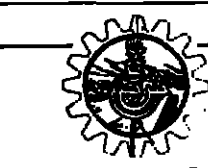
AMMAN (J.T.) — The government of Japan will extend assistance to the Jordan Electricity Authority (JEA) for the purpose of organising a training course in the field of electric power.

An agreement to this effect was signed at JEA Tuesday between M.S. Arafah, director general of the JEA, and Shozo Matsuura, head of the

Japanese Delegation of JICA, according to a statement.

Under this agreement, the government of Japan will conduct the training course at the Electric Training Centre of the JEA supported by the technical cooperation scheme of the Third-Country Training Programme of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

Participants from 16 Arab countries (Sudan, Yemen, Mauritania, Somali, Oman, Djibouti, Syria, U.A.E., Algeria, Egypt, Morocco, Tunisia, Qatar, Bahrain, Saudi Arabia and Lebanon) will be invited to the Electric Power Training Course to be held at the Electric Training Centre of the JEA from 1992 to 1996, according to the statement.



HASHEMITE KINGDOM OF JORDAN POTASH PRODUCTION EXPANSION PROJECT NO. 30-4857-39-7

ADVERTISEMENT FOR THE SUPPLY OF TWO WORKBOATS

The Arab Potash Company Limited (A.P.C.) of Amman, Jordan invites the interested manufacturing companies to tender for the supply of two (2) workboats which will be operated along with harvesters in the carnallite pans at the Potash facilities near Safi, on the southern end of the Dead Sea, about 200 km north of the port of Aqaba.

Manufacturing companies interested in tendering for these two (2) WORKBOATS can purchase the tender documents from the company's head offices at the address shown below. The cost for this tender package shall be JD 50. — non-refundable.

Messrs., The Arab Potash Co., Ltd. P.O.Box 1470, Shmelsani Amman

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One (1) original and three (3) copies of each bid are required. Each copy to be submitted in two (2) separate envelopes for technical and commercial purposes. Closing date for submitting this tender will be 12:00 noon, February 25, 1992.

A.Y. Ensour Managing Director The Arab Potash Co., Ltd.,

Announcement From The WATER AUTHORITY OF JORDAN Invitation For Bids (IFB) No. 51/91/SP, 52/91/W

1. The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan has received a loan from Kreditanstalt Fuer Wiederaufbau (KfW) in Deutschmarks towards the water sector programme and it is intended that part of the proceeds of this loan will be applied to eligible payments under the contract(s) for which this IFB has been issued.
2. The Water Authority now invites sealed bids from eligible bidders for the following:-

No. of Tender	Supply of	Non-refundable Fee in JD	Performance Security in JD
1) 51/91/SP	Submersible Pumps & Spare Parts	50.-	5,500.-
2) 52/91/W	Welding Machines	50.-	3,000.-

3. Interested eligible bidders may obtain further information from, and inspect the bidding documents at, the office of the Secretary General, Tenders Division, Water Authority, P.O.Box 2412, Amman, Jordan, tel. 06-680100, Tlx. 22439 WAJ JO, FAX 679143.
4. A complete set of the tender documents may be purchased by any interested eligible bidder on the submission of a written application to the above and upon payment of a non-refundable fee as mentioned in Item 2 above.
5. All bids must be accompanied by a security as mentioned in Item 2 above and must be delivered to the office not later than 1200 hours, Jordan local time, on Tuesday 18/2/1992.

Eng. Mutazz Belbelsi Secretary General Water Authority

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation
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Timely move

THE RESOLUTION passed last week by the Council of Arab Economic Unity (CAEU) calling on the Arab countries to lift their embargo on Iraq and to free frozen Iraqi assets is a timely and correct move. Iraq and the Iraqi people paid very dearly for their invasion of Kuwait last year and it is high time that the sufferings of the Iraqi people ended. In substance the U.N. Security Council resolutions imposing sanctions on Iraq were adopted to reverse the Iraqi occupation of Kuwait. This has been achieved a long time ago and, therefore, the raison d'être behind such punitive measures have ceased to exist ever since. Moreover, Iraq has complied with all the measures imposed by the Security Council to disarm itself of mass destruction weapons even though it is not the only country in the region to mass such weapons. Israel has already about 300 nuclear heads and Iran is well into its own nuclear programme. The bottom line, however, is that the suffering of the innocent people of Iraq who are being forced to pay the price of Arab and international sanctions for no fault of their own. The Iraqis, deprived of effective democratic institutions, are not responsible for the grave mistakes that led to Kuwait's invasion. To hold them responsible for such heavy policy decisions taken by their central government is something that is clearly untenable. The CAEU's Dec. 5 decision, therefore, came at the appropriate time in order to serve propitiatory notice on the international community that the Arab World does not share the erroneous conviction of some of the international community that holds the children and men and women of Iraq responsible for the Gulf war and accountable for all the damages that ensued from it. The international community cannot be expected to take the initiative in ending the economic and financial sanctions against Iraq as long as the Arab World stays silent. Now that a major Arab League institution has taken just such an initiative, the miseries and agonies of the Iraqi people would have at last an opportunity to end. It behoves the Arab countries to head the verdict of the council immediately. Hopefully such a wise Arab course would eventually lead to an international response and an end to the punishment of the Iraqi people.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

AL RAI Arabic daily Tuesday commented on the vote of confidence in the new government of Prime Minister Sharif Zeid Ben Shaker, secured in Parliament Monday, and said that the way is open now for close cooperation between Parliament and the government so that the government's programmes can be implemented. It was under Sharif Zeid's government that the 1989 parliamentary elections were held free and fair, bringing to Parliament a group of deputies whose main aim is to offer service to their nation through legislation based on the people's needs, the paper said. It is only reasonable for the Jordanian citizens to assume that the deputies will now direct most of their attention and their efforts towards helping the government solve chronic problems like unemployment and poverty and find means of dealing with the financial and economic ills of the country, the paper noted. It said that no one believes that the government can perform wonders and miracles, but it is reasonable to think that a Parliament which confides in the government should offer all the help it can to enable the executive authority deal with problems and attain further development and progress for the country.

A columnist in Sawt Al Shaab tackled the question of strikes by dissatisfied workers in Jordanian factories and other organisations, and said that strikes or threats to carry them out have become possible under the umbrella of democracy the country is now enjoying. In the past, strikes were taboo and meant that those instigating others to stage such actions were to face trouble not only with the employer but also with the government, said Ahmad Dhilwan. Strikes have been a tool in the hands of workers in more advanced nations for many years and Jordanians had been wishing to have the right to strike when circumstances called for such action, but had been barred to do so in the absence of democracy, the writer said. He said that the workers of the Jordan Electric Power Company (JEPCO) are now threatening to stage a strike for better pay and working conditions, by Jan. 11, 1992, and it is hoped that no such action would be taken. The same workers had reached a compromise with the management in August of 1990, thus averting a strike action that could have caused so much damage to the economy, the writer said. He expressed hope that the management will respond to the demands of 642 workers who are in dire need since their monthly salary does not exceed JD 71. Through dialogue and reasoning, said the writer, the two sides can avert any action that could cause severe damage to the national economy.

Economic Forum

The political lining in Jordan's economic quagmire

By Dr. Abdalla Malki

Analysts and observers who are interested in predicting and assessing the path of the Jordanian economy in the coming months and years are advised to read what they are looking for mainly in the political developments and shifts that are sweeping the Middle East area. To try to arrive at this goal through the classical approach of combining economic data and interpreting standard economic indicators will not be very useful. In particular, our impression is that these political developments will have an economic content that will bypass the IMF-sponsored economic adjustment programme and render it redundant.

Now, this programme is made up of two distinct segments. One segment belongs to Jordan and refers to the tackling of our external debt problem through rescheduling, which is a mechanism to postpone the problem rather than to solve it. The second segment belongs to the International Monetary Fund itself and refers to implanting in the soil of the Jordanian economy the seeds of the market economy and free international trade. This, in itself, is not harmful, however, provided the timing is right and social considerations are not grossly victimised.

The core problem of the programme is the phasing out of the budget deficit which the programme emphasises in a very

extraordinary way. Other measures recommended by the IMF have already been implemented, such as currency devaluation, floating interest rates, restricting domestic credit and domestic public borrowing and refraining from imposing any external trade barriers. Thus, the headache starts from the budget deficit. To compress this deficit, taxes have to be increased, probably beyond the limits of taxable capacity, and subsidies on some basic consumption commodities have to be removed. Both measures are unpopular, are drawing fierce fire and therefore are creating serious tension inside the Jordanian society.

Our impressions is that the political developments will boost the foreign support to the Jordanian budget to the extent that will relieve the treasury from the task of raising taxes and wiping consumption subsidies.

And it is our firm belief that, from now on, the Jordanian economy will fare very satisfactorily and that its progress will proceed almost undisturbedly. Our economy sank to the bottom at some point following the eruption of the Gulf crisis on August 2, 1990. And at a certain point thereafter, it bottomed out so that now it has nowhere to go but upwards. The start of the peace

process in the area gave a vital and irrevocable push to our economy. And, irrespective of the results of the peace talks, the concomitant momentum and the commitment of the world, especially the Europeans, Americans and Japanese, to the economic well-being of Jordan is irreversible even if the peace negotiations are to be stalled. Above all, the turbulent conditions of the Middle East area during the last one or two years have now given way to stability that will seemingly last for a long time. Stability is the most basic prerequisite of economic progress and the Jordanian economy stands ready and qualified to benefit from such stability, drawing particularly on its assets of economic freedom, free enterprise and burgeoning democracy.

The Jordanian economy is essentially a private sector economy, or that is what it should be. Under the pressure of the IMF economic adjustment programme, the current economic policy is tightening the screws on the private sector and is actively antagonising various parts of it. In particular, high taxes, and sometimes misguided ones, are both jeopardising production incentives and the saving potential. Now, the managers of our economic policy are well advised to redraw their attitudes towards the private sector in light of the new political realities.

Nuclear danger in Soviet Union is real, experts say

By Nicholas Doughty
Reuters

BRUSSELS — As the Soviet Union collapses, one burning issue worries the West: How safe is the world's biggest nuclear arsenal and would it be possible for a renegade republic or extremists to use one of the doomsday weapons?

The answer, military experts say, is yes.

The Soviet strategic arsenal of long-range missiles — based chiefly in deep silos, on submarines or bombers — is thought to be well protected by elaborate codes and checking systems. It would be almost impossible to launch one independently.

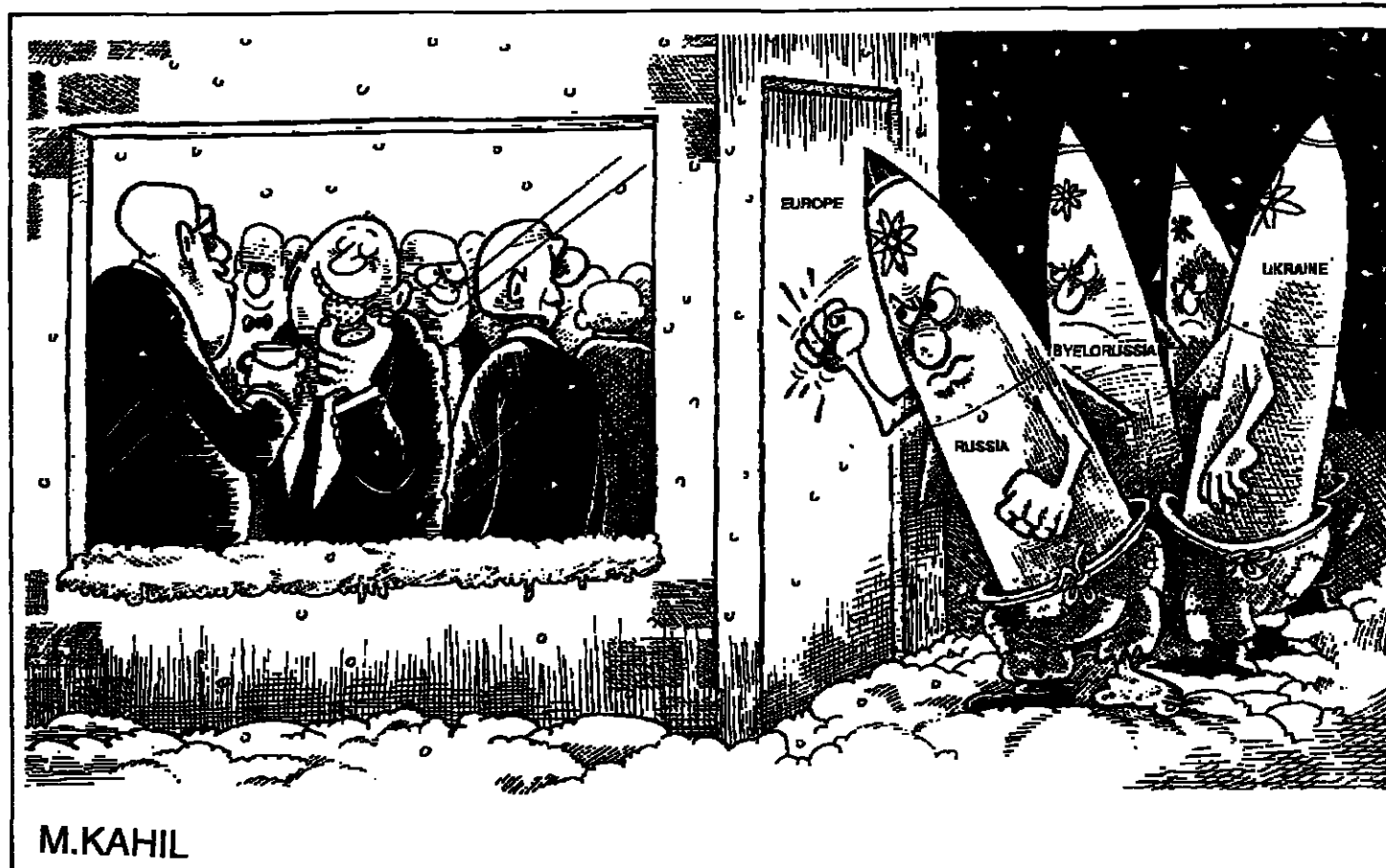
The problem is with thousands of more accessible battlefield nuclear weapons, such as artillery shells and short-range missiles intended for tactical use against enemy troop concentrations. Each one could destroy a large town.

"If they really wanted to, there is no doubt at all that the Ukraine or some other republic could use tactical nuclear weapons," said Henry Dods, an expert on the Soviet Armed Forces with the authoritative Jane's defence weekly.

"As far as we know, there is very little protection of those systems, apart from the fact that missiles are guarded separately from the launchers and the artillery shells kept away from the guns that would fire them."

But the West has limited knowledge of Soviet safety systems and cannot be sure who will have political control in future.

"What worries all of us is that it may no longer just be enough to get on the 'hotline' to Moscow



and say 'we have a nuclear problem,' Mr. Dods told Reuters. "We may now need a line to Kiev or the capitals of other republics as well."

Growing signs of discontent within the Soviet Armed Forces could mean problems with guarding tactical warheads properly.

That role had originally been filled by now-discredited KGB, while the military had the artillery and missile launchers used to fire the warheads.

Totalling almost 30,000 warheads, the Soviet arsenal is the world's biggest.

The arms are spread throughout four republics, with the vast majority concentrated in the three powerful Slav republics — Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia — which have said they are setting up a new commonwealth.

But Kazakhstan, a Central Asian republic not included in the new agreement, has around 10

per cent of the total, experts say. The key issue is how the political chain of command will work.

Statements from the new commonwealth and what remains of the union that control would be maintained seem reassuring.

"Since the Slav republics have the vast majority of the nuclear weapons, it is good to see that the political authorities there are taking such a responsible attitude," said Colonel Andrew Duncan of the London-based International

Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS).

But there are also confusing signals. It is still unclear whether Russian President Boris Yeltsin has a finger on the nuclear button with Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk has said that Ukraine wanted to share control of the Soviet Union's nuclear arsenal with Russia and Byelorussia in a

"three-button" system.

He said this would improve security, but NATO officials said it also raised the worrying prospect of a struggle for control of nuclear weapons at the highest level if Mr. Gorbachev proved unwilling to renounce the ultimate presidential power.

In any case, sorting out who has political control of Soviet nuclear weapons still leaves questions about the "battlefield" weapons like nuclear artillery shells which do not require top-level access codes to fire.

Military analysts say that if they are not properly guarded, or if fuses are not removed and kept away from the warheads, they could be seized by extremists or taken over by republics.

"If the political authorities in a republic convince the local military commander that he works for them, that republic then has control over tactical weapons," said one NATO source.

If extremists seized a warhead without the means to fire it, they might have trouble making use of the weapon.

But they would still have the essential components and experts say there are thousands of Soviet scientists with little to do who might offer their services for money.

"Those people could do this within the Soviet Union or in third countries that are developing nuclear weapons," said Richard Kokoski of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute (SIPRI).

"The nuclear knowledge is there and it is dangerous, providing you have the material, some money, a few scientists and technicians, making a nuclear weapon is not that hard."

U.S. adjusts to role as sole superpower step by step

By Carol Giacomo
Reuters

WASHINGTON — The United States is adjusting to its new role as the world's only superpower, learning one day at a time how to balance the increased responsibilities and risks.

It has spent most of the 46 years since World War II playing a lead role on a world stage where the global map, major power relationships and expectations were familiar.

But as 1992 approaches the Soviet Union is disintegrating at an accelerating rate — even the pro-Gorbachev Bush administration now admits the union is all but dead — and the concept of an international strategic counterbalance to the United States has passed on with it.

"I don't think anybody understands the ramifications of it yet," one senior State Department official said of Washington's new premier role and the shifting dynamics of what many see as an alarmingly unstable new world order.

"There's a real sense that we're not at the end of some stage, we're very much at the beginning. And there is a lot of apprehension," the official told Reuters.

"It gets scarier as you realise (the post-cold war world) is not going to be pretty and there's a real strong sense you just don't want to do something that could be wrong."

Officials say the new U.S. pre-eminence is a blessing, a curse and a complicating factor in their calculations.

They anticipate it will give America new leverage with some governments while others may be more resentful, accusing Washington of trying to impose its will too often.

Its role will be challenged, they say, and there may be nostalgia for the relative clarity of superpower rivalry.

For example, the freeing of all U.S. hostages in Lebanon might have made Washington inclined to improve ties with Iran more quickly if a strong Soviet Union had been competing for a closer relationship with that key Islamic republic, analysts say.

"We're now passed the euphoric stage of, 'isn't it great, our ideology prevailed and ... communism is dead,'" one U.S. official said.

"That felt good but ... there's a recognition that the new order is going to evolve and that just because we are the last remaining superpower does not necessarily mean it's going to evolve in a direction that we're comfortable with," he said.

"If it devolves into civil war all across Europe and the Soviet Union and into Southeast Asia ... then being the only remaining superpower is going to be a pretty frightening burden. Certainly we can't ... fix all those situations."

Former Defence Secretary James Schlesinger doubts the United States is prepared for what he calls the "lengthy period of semi-chaos" following the collapse of old structures of authority in the former communist states of the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe.

While the changes of the past three years have put all these countries on the road to democracy, it is a fragile democracy that the United States must be careful to nurture, he and other experts say.

In an article in the diplomatic Journal Foreign Policy, Mr. Schlesinger also warned of the "inevitable growth of animosity toward the United States as the

leading power in the world."

Already that is being felt. Some Croatians, for example, have been extremely critical of Washington for failing to recognise their independence and to play a more direct role to stop the civil war in Yugoslavia.

But Washington has been happy to leave that morass of ethnic conflict and nationalism to the European Community to solve, albeit with little success so far.

Some critics have faulted President George Bush for not moving faster to recognise Ukrainian independence, while others have attacked his refusal to offer massive direct aid to the Soviet Union.

Mr. Bush's defenders say this caution is a function of his keen sense that this is a unique moment in history and that the U.S. role in many cases has taken on vastly heightened importance. So he is especially anxious not to make a mistake, they add.

Now Germany is united and communism has been rejected in Eastern Europe, what challenges will occupy American diplomats in the years ahead?

America is expected to remain engaged in the situations in Iraq and elsewhere in the Middle East, in NATO, China and Japan, in what becomes of the Soviet Union and in issues like non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

Where possible, as with Yugoslavia, it will encourage regional solutions to conflicts.

The United States has taken the lead in Middle East peace-making.

Analysts say that in responding to other world crises, the United States is likely to build on the Gulf war precedent of pursuing multilateral, rather than unilateral, action.

U.S. undercutting Palestinians

By Rowland Evans and Robert Nobak

The following article is reprinted from the Dec. 16, 1991, issue of the Washington Post.

AFTER one week of sulky Washington peace talks, the Bush administration's reluctance to pressure Israel is undercutting Palestinian negotiators and giving Israeli nationalists a free hand back in the West Bank.

The hands-off approach by Secretary of State James Baker in the first Israel-Palestine negotiations since Israel took the West Bank 24 years ago leaves Palestinians impotent against Israel. They are stateless appellants armed with nothing but a righteous demand for self-government they cannot fulfill by themselves.

Mr. Baker may well be biding his time for future intervention at a moment he thinks will maximise U.S. clout to squeeze Israel for necessary concessions. He is known to feel that he and the president have domestic political leverage on this issue, but the leverage was not applied last week.

"We got a written letter from Baker months ago that the United States promised to play an effective role," a key Arab negotiator said privately, plus the promise of an invitation to meet President Bush. "That was when they were twisting our arms last summer to start talks." It was also before Israel's complaint two weeks ago that the United States was siding with the Arabs.

The signal to the Palestinians that the Israeli complaint had been effective was the U.S. refusal to give a visa to Nabil Sha'ath,

the Palestinian spark plug at the conference who was blackballed because he is a member of the Palestine Liberation Organisation. He is indeed a leader of the PLO, but on the opposite side from PLO extremists. Despite agreeing to negotiate with the Palestinians, Israel will not tolerate any dealings with members of the PLO, no matter how moderate.

Mr. Sha'ath declared virtual Palestinian independence from Syrian influence at Madrid. A PhD from the University of Pennsylvania's Wharton School, Mr. Sha'ath has been routinely given U.S. visas in the past. But diplomatic sources told us Mr. Baker was worried that his appearance here now would trigger a charge that the United States was getting ready to open a direct dialogue with the PLO.

On the West Bank, land seizures and tougher security measures by the Israeli occupation army and nationalist settlers have thrown Mr. Bush's appeal to Prime Minister Yitzhak Shamir for "confidence-building" gestures back in his face. The president's demand for an end to new Jewish settlers on Arab lands has become a joke.

Since Madrid, hundreds of acres occupied by Arab families have been seized as "state-owned" land for new housing or for broad highways between existing settlements to guarantee the settlers' security against dispossessed Palestinians. Even families in historically Arab East Jerusalem are being evicted from their homes by settlers with police support.

In Birzeit, the promised opening of the leading Palestinian university has been cancelled and the city of Ramallah, near the campus, placed under 24-

hour curfew for two weeks. That means no one can leave home.

Although Israeli diplomats denied to use any connection, Mr. Shamir's apparent tolerance of these confrontation policies followed an unpublished Dec. 6 speech by Housing Minister Ariel Sharon in New York. Influential Jewish Americans and even Israeli officials found it highly distasteful.

Mr. Sharon, a leading contender for Mr. Shamir's job, attacked the United States for "deliberately humiliating" Israel and forcing it into political concessions that "jeopardise its capability for self-defence." While doing this Mr. Sharon said, the Bush administration "conducts a policy of appeasement towards the countries of the Arab-Iranian world."

For such talk and actions not to be protested from Washington, the only world capital with influence in Jerusalem, undermines Palestinian negotiators. Weakening the negotiating team automatically strengthens PLO extremists bitterly opposed to the talks. They will get a hunting license to trigger a bloody new round of the intifada.

Palestinians claim the U.S. posture is the result of Mr. Baker's concern not to alienate the pro-Israel lobby more than necessary in an election year. But he is known to feel he has Americans behind him in an even "harder" posture in the Middle East, reflected by the strong U.S. hand last September in denying Israel \$10 billion in loan guarantees.

Stateless Palestinians cannot negotiate with Israel unless they have recourse to a slice of offsetting American power. The longer Jim Baker waits to exert that pressure, the tougher he will find it.

Handwritten signature or mark.

Co-sponsors may have to step in

(Continued from page 1)

track" in the negotiations was untenable and unacceptable. "The letters of assurances and invitations spoke about two tracks, Arab-Israeli and Palestinian-Israeli, and did not mention a 'third track' role for the joint delegation," Dr. Majali and Abdul Shafi said, "according to an Arab delegate."

"The asked the Israeli negotiators to accept the two tracks and negotiate with the two parties accordingly," he added.

The Israelis replied by giving the Arab side yet another proposal, which was described by Jordanian delegates as "not much different" from earlier ones.

It was likely to be rejected in favour of a new call on the Israelis to go into the official negotiating room and discuss how to split the "two-track" approach approved by the co-sponsors and the Arab parties.

The Palestinians handed the Israelis another, separate letter on Israeli settlements in the West Bank and South Lebanon.

Arab delegates were opposing hope yesterday on the meeting between President Bush and Foreign Minister Levy producing a new momentum for breaking the deadlock.

"We expect President Bush to have told Levy that Israel had to stop procrastination and move towards starting talks on substance," an Arab delegate said. "We hope that was the American message."

At the end of his meeting with President Bush, Minister Levy said that he relayed Israel's continued commitment to promoting the peace process. "It is right to stress the importance of continuing with this unequivocal stand. The sides concerned must be the ones who resolve the problem. Therefore there is the principle of direct negotiations without preconditions," he said.

He said that President Bush "I am pleased to say agreed with this principle."

Although the joint delegation had reported some progress in its negotiations with the Israelis during the past week, talks took a turn to the worse Tuesday as the Israelis set a

deadline for Wednesday afternoon by which to leave Washington without softening their position on the Palestinian track.

"We have almost reached a deadlock in our talks with the Israelis," Marwan Mubasher, spokesman for the Jordanian delegation, told the Jordan Times in a telephone interview from the State Department. "But we will not take this case to the Americans yet," he added.

Spokeswoman for the Palestinian delegation Hanan Ashrawi said after the meeting broke up that the joint delegation received a response from the Israelis "but we have not been able to extract any positive points from it."

Dr. Abdul Shafi said that it was not yet time to ask for U.S. intervention in resolving the dispute but he warned that negotiations "are quickly moving towards a deadlock."

"We do not think this is the time for taking it to the co-sponsors... we cannot take this measure and leave it to the Americans," Dr. Abdul Shafi said in a joint press conference with Dr. Ashrawi at the Grand Hotel, where the Palestinian representatives are staying.

"We are the party concerned and we are going to keep pursuing peace... but if it reaches a deadlock then the co-sponsors should intervene," he added.

Only six members of the Jordanian team met with Mr. Djerjian and his aides after the morning's session ended. Palestinian delegates were scheduled to meet Ambassador Djerjian later in the day before another meeting between the three Arab and Israeli parties met this afternoon (5:00 Washington time).

Dr. Mubasher and other Jordanian delegates said their team discussed the agenda of the multilateral talks to be held next month in Moscow. The Americans suggested placing arms control and security, water, economic development and refugees. The Jordanian delegates asked that human rights be placed on the agenda as well.

The Moscow talks will commence at the foreign minister's level on Jan. 28 and then will break up into com-

mittees to tackle the various issues and these committees could meet anywhere and discussed mutually agreed upon agenda.

Israeli and American officials also met Monday to discuss a possible change in venue from Moscow to a West European city for regional talks. Considering shifting the talks to Brussels or Lisbon after the foreign minister's meeting.

State Department deputy spokesman Richard Boucher said, however, there has been no change in the venue for the multilateral talks.

On progress of the peace talks, he said there have been meetings with

the various delegations but he said the administration has not put forward proposals to resolve disputes.

"We have not put forward a proposal (to the Jordanian-Palestinian-Israeli negotiations), we have worked with the various parties, we have discussed with them various ideas and suggestions that are in play," Mr. Boucher said.

"We have not put forward any proposal of our own. We've encouraged them to resolve these issues and to move from process to substance," he added.

George Hawatmeh, Nermeen Murad and Ghadeer Tabar.

Iraq rejects U.N. blame

(Continued from page 1)

Bakhtaran, the Iranian news agency IRNA, reported.

Tehran Radio said Mr. Tondgouyan was killed by Iraqi forces but gave no other details about his death.

Until earlier this year Iran had made repeated calls for the re-

lease of the only Iranian minister taken prisoner during the eight-year war.

Mr. Tondgouyan and several oil ministry officials were captured on Oct. 31, 1980 by Iraqi soldiers while inspecting oil installations in the southwestern Khuzestan province which Iraq had invaded a month earlier.

Syria, Israel trade charges

(Continued from page 1)

"It was clear that they wanted only to mark time, they wanted only to make believe that they are meeting with us without permitting the process to lead anywhere," he said.

The stand-off could set the stage for renewed U.S. involve-

ment. The United States has declined to intervene in the Washington talks, preferring to allow the parties to muddle on alone.

Israeli Foreign Minister David Levy, who met President George Bush Tuesday, said Israel would like Washington to stay on the sidelines.

U.N. vote upstages talks in media

(Continued from page 1)

intervention and a "U.S.-imposed settlement."

Reports in The Washington Post and USA Today said U.S. and Israeli officials Monday met to discuss a possible change in venue from Moscow to a European site for next month's planned multilateral meet-

ing. According to the reports, the officials are now considering moving the talks to Brussels or Lisbon.

The Washington Post also ran a feature by Nora Boustany on the Palestinian negotiating team, and how they represent the evolution of the Palestinian national movement. (Story is to be reprinted in full in the Jordan Times).

U.N. vote

(Continued from page 1)

government reaction to international issues often is several days late.

Some Gulf newspapers published brief front-page boxes on the vote, making no editorial comment on the outcome of the session.

But different stands taken by Arab states on the resolution might have contributed to the lack of comment to avoid fuelling disagreements. Oman, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, Kuwait and Bahrain declined to participate in the session, while the rest of the Arab World voted against abrogating the resolution.

The U.N. session was held as Arab-Israeli peace talks in Washington appeared to make no progress towards solving problems between Israel and the Arab participants — Jordan, Syria, Lebanon and the Palestinians.

The United States and its Western allies hoped the U.N. vote would encourage the Israelis to show some leniency and agree to the principle of relinquishing territory in return for normalising its status in the region.

A Syrian Foreign Ministry spokesman said the vote "does not eliminate the fact that (Israeli) laws, legislations and discriminating measures are still in force."

The spokesman expressed surprise that the resolution was repealed at a time when "the Zionist practices against the Arabs in the occupied territories are escalating... if compared to the practices that existed in 1975 when the resolution was adopted."

The English-language Syria Times said in a front-page editorial that the vote was "a blow to freedom and to the peace-loving people of the world."

'Returnees should be an issue in talks'

(Continued from page 1)

four of Jordan's population of four million are recognised as refugees."

In all, the Prince said, it is likely that the total number of people involuntarily displaced in the Middle East since August 1990 totals five million. This, he said, "represents one of the largest mass displacement in recent times and possibly the most far-reaching in terms of the number of countries affected."

Prince Hassan said that the area witnessed five main waves of displacements the first being caused by the mass flight from Jordan and neighbouring states of up to one million migrant workers from Iraq and Kuwait, the second was the displacement of 65,000 people occurring between the outbreak of the war in January 1991 and the ceasefire, and the third wave followed the rebellions inside Iraq which witnessed the flight of up to two million

Kurds and Shiites. By April 1991, a fourth wave came with the return of Kurdish and Shiite refugees from Turkey and Iran while the fifth wave of mass displacement was that of the exodus of Jordanians and Palestinians from Kuwait estimated at about 300,000, Prince Hassan said.

The Prince said that the episodes of mass displacement have sharpened attention for debates about the current refugee situation that is likely to continue to engage policy-makers over the next decade.

JORDAN WELFARE LOTTERY

Ordinary issue No. 22

Drawing of Dec. 17, 1991

Winning Tickets

Holder of ticket No. **30437**

Wins JD 30,000

Holder of ticket No. **83279**

Wins JD 7,000

Holder of ticket No. **39810**

Wins JD 3,500

Holder of ticket No. **73371**

Wins JD 2,500

Holder of ticket No. **62751**

Wins JD 1,500

Holder of ticket No. **41964**

Wins JD 1,200

Holder of ticket No. **50046**

Wins JD 1,000

Holder of ticket No. **24813**

Wins JD 800

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 1,300 each wins JD 120

30438 30447 30537 31437 40437

30438 30427 30337 39437 20437

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 700 each wins JD 70

83270 83289 83379 84279 93279

83278 83269 83179 82279 73279

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 400 each wins JD 40

39811 39820 39910 30810 49810

39819 39800 39710 38810 29810

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 200 each wins JD 20

73372 73381 73471 74371 83371

73370 73361 73271 72371 63371

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 150 each wins JD 15

62752 62761 62851 63751 72751

62750 62741 62651 61751 52751

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 100 each wins JD 10

41965 41974 41064 42964 51964

41963 41954 41864 40964 31964

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 80 each wins JD 8

50047 50056 50146 51046 60046

50045 50036 50946 59046 40046

Ten consolation prizes totalling JD 70 each wins JD 7

24812 24823 24913 25813 14813

24814 24803 24713 23813 34813

Ticket numbers **99044 49161 76960 39454** win JD 200 each

Ticket numbers **77179 28844 37049** win JD 100 each

TICKETS ENDING WITH

7383 5603 5565 Win JD 50 each

5893 6455 8728 Win JD 10 each

3512 2416 Win JD 3 each

47 Win JD 3 each

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4586 0147 Win JD 5 each

456 405 014 968 Win JD 5 each

10,000 ticket ending with 2 Win JD 2 each

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Crisis pushed to backburner

(Continued from page 1)

observers, the main factor that determines the future relationship between Parliament and the executive.

In his speeches, deputies explicitly expressed resentment of what they viewed as official attempts to marginalise the role of Parliament. Islamist Deputy Leith Shbeilat was very specific. He did not directly blame Mr. Masri for curbing political freedoms, but argued that the problem lies in that the prime minister did not have "the real authority."

Mr. Shbeilat was alluding to the power and influence of the security forces. In his speech to the opening session of the parliament, His Majesty King Hussein indicated total commitment to democracy and that the palace will remain well above domestic politics.

The fact that the parliamentary procedure was not affected by the palace's endorsement of Shafi Zaid was viewed by many political analysts as a very positive sign towards consolidating the democratisation process.

Parliament and government sources maintain that political differences and hurdles could be contained as long as a balanced relationship is maintained between the government and Parliament.

In his speech, Deputy Bassam Haddadin who withdrew his vote of confidence, implied that opposition could take a constructive role provided that there was respect by all parties to the rules of the democratic game.

Drawing on the peace process as an example, Mr. Haddadin who belongs to the Jordan Democratic People's

Party, (JPDP), argued that opposition to the peace talks could actually boost the Jordanian negotiating position and the country's sovereignty.

That was only possible, he maintained, if the role of Parliament is protected and respected.

Deputy Mansour Murad, who spoke on behalf of deputies Kassar and Shihab, charged that political freedoms have witnessed serious setbacks over the last two years and that consecutive governments did not fulfil their promises.

The demand for the permanent repeal of the martial law has been pressed by many deputies expressed resentment of what they viewed as official procrastination of efforts to remove security restrictions and pass new liberal laws.

A government source told the Jordan Times that the cabinet understands the urgency of the issue and will cooperate with Parliament in putting the new laws into effect as soon as possible.

Deputies made it clear that they will not accept the government promises and that they want practical steps to be taken.

The parliamentarians steered away from sharp rhetoric in an attempt to give the government and Parliament a chance to develop a new working relationship. The parliamentarians, some analysts argue, were also restrained because they do not want to be viewed as challenging the regime, especially after King Hussein himself presented the cabinet's programme.

Some deputies argued that in the governments' programmes should be presented by the prime minister so as to confine the differences between Parliament and government.

Repeal of 3379 will not affect talks

(Continued from page 1)

certain pressure groups in the U.S. and Europe and the fact that 1992 is an election year in the U.S.

"If the repeal of the resolution is a reality now and I don't think it will have any effect on the talks in Washington," Dr. Tabbaoui said. "But I hope that the Arab delegations in Washington would not allow this to effect the momentum of the peace process that is already in progress."

The fact that a majority has voted to repeal the resolution proves that this is a changing world," said a senior Jordanian official who preferred not to be identified. "It also reflects the weakening Arab position and shows the state of Arab affairs," he added.

The General Assembly had voted 72-35 with 32 abstentions in 1975 at the urging of Arab countries to pass the resolution that equated Zionism "as a form of racism and racial discrimination."

The decision to revoke that resolution was an overwhelming majority in Monday's General Assembly session after the U.S., Israel and many Western countries described the resolution as a "stain" on the United Nations.

One hundred and eleven countries voted in favour of revoking the resolution, 25 voted against and 13 abstained.

"Repealing the resolution does not change the fact that Zionism is racism because it obviates the existence of other people, especially the Palestinians," Mr. Bataineh said. "It (Zionism) is an exclusive ideology that renders others in Palestine to the status of second class citizens."

A former Jordanian ambassador to Turkey, Walid Sadi, described the decision to revoke the resolution as "politically motivated."

"From a legal stand point the decision to repeal the resolution is wrong," Dr. Sadi said. "Had it been legally motivated Israel should have been asked to repeal domestic laws that are inherently discriminatory in their nature as seen by international human rights groups."

Dr. Sadi, who served as a chairman of the U.N. Commission on Human Rights in 1980/81, said that Israel had continuously "refused to ratify a string of international human rights institutions that have been universally applied such as the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the International Convention on the Suppression and Punishment of the Crime of Apartheid" among others.

"The U.S. is trying to appease Israel, first by repealing the resolution and also by promising them the \$10 billion housing guarantees in return to their (Israeli) participation in the peace process," Dr. Sadi said.

"This was an American attempt to appease Israel after it was said that the Jewish state was persecuted by Washington to participate in the peace process," Mr. Hikmat said.

Echoing the sentiment, Mr. Bataineh summed up what he perceived to be the reason behind the American push to repeal the resolution. "By repealing the resolution the Americans probably thought it would encourage Israel to adopt a milder stand with regard to the peace process, but they are wrong," he said.

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STUDIO

Jagge takes 1st World Cup skiing victory

MADONNA DI CAMPIGLIO, Italy (AP) — Norway's Finn Christian Jagge won his first World Cup victory in Tuesday's slalom here, edging home idol Alberto Tomba by 0.09 seconds in this Italian Dolomite resort.

The 25-year-old Norwegian silenced a partisan crowd of 20,000 as he put together a winning aggregate of one minute, 28.43 seconds skiing two faultless heats down the steep Miramonti Track.

Tomba missed his fifth victory of this season ending in 1:28.50 minutes.

Young Swede Tomas Fogdö edged another Norwegian, Ole Christian Furuseth, for third place.

Fogdö trailed the winner by 0.56 seconds while Furuseth, a winner in Campiglio last year, had a gap of 0.92 seconds from the team.

Tuesday's winner-up place kept Tomba atop the overall cup standings with 640 points.

Swiss Paul Accola placed fifth, 1.78 seconds behind Jagge, and held second place overall, with 581 points.

Defending World Cup champion Marc Girardelli of Luxembourg, who lagged 11th after the first heat, climbed five places following a fast second run and ended sixth.

Austrian Michael Tritscher placed seventh, ahead of Italian Fabio de Crignis.

Jagge, the only World Cup skier to use Japanese-made Yamaha skis, was the fastest in the first heat, in 43.03 seconds, and had the third best time in the second run, in 45.38.

The Norwegian, on his fifth World Cup season, withstood strong psychological pressure as he came down after Tomba's impressive 45.16 in the second heat.

Jagge appeared ready for his first World Cup triumph after he placed second to the Italian ace in a previous slalom at Sestriere last week following a fourth and a fifth in the initial cup slaloms in the United States last month.

"I am not disappointed with this second place," said Tomba at the finish line. "I skied my best."

Liverpool drawn against Genoa in UEFA Cup

LONDON (R) — Liverpool were drawn against Genoa in the quarter-finals of the UEFA Cup Tuesday, their first competitive game against an Italian side since the Hays Stadium riot.

The English club are playing in European competition for the first season since receiving a six-year ban after their fans rioted in the 1985 European Cup final against Italian club Juventus in Brussels, resulting in the deaths of 39 people.

The draw kept them apart from two other former European champions, with Real Madrid playing Sigma Olomouc of Czechoslovakia and Ajax Amsterdam paired against Ghent of Belgium.

The other quarterfinal pitted Italy's Torino against Denmark's BK 1903 Copenhagen.

Liverpool, four times European champions, were pleased with the draw against a side making their debut season in Europe.

"While we are quite confident, especially after our good performances in the previous rounds, it is still going to be very difficult for us in view of the foreign player restriction," said club secretary Peter Robinson.

"To our advantage is that (manager) Graeme Souness has great experience of Italian club football," Souness played for Genoa's neighbours Sampdoria, who share the same stadium.

Sampdoria's home tie against Anderlecht in the European Cup on March 18 forced UEFA to switch their draw and order Genoa to play the first leg at home rather than Liverpool.

"I do not think that having to play the second leg away now is of great advantage," said Robinson.

UEFA also swapped the legs between Ajax and Ghent, with the Belgians having to play the first leg at home because of a clash with club Brugge's European Cup Winner's Cup tie against Atletico Madrid.

Real Madrid manager Manuel Fernandez Trigo said after the draw, they would have liked to have met Liverpool.

"I had hoped that we would have picked Liverpool. It would have been a fantastic draw, but Olomouc are technically a strong side and we can not underestimate them."

Italy, Denmark on standby for European championship

GENEVA (R) — Italy and Denmark were put on standby by UEFA Tuesday to play in next year's European Soccer Championship finals if the Soviet Union or Yugoslavia are prevented from fielding teams.

The European Football Union, fearing the break-up of the Soviet Union and civil war in Yugoslavia could force the two countries to abandon their places in the finals in Sweden, decided to name substitute teams.

In a brief statement after a meeting of their European Football Championship Committee, UEFA said Italy, group runners-up to the Soviet Union, and Denmark, runners-up to Yugoslavia, would qualify.

The proposal would need to be ratified at UEFA's full meeting in Gothenburg on Jan. 16, the eve of the draw for the June finals.

At the weekend the new Ukraine Football Federation promised its players could still represent the Soviet Union at the finals.

SPORTS NEWS IN BRIEF

Edberg, Seles voted world champions

LONDON (AP) — The International Tennis Federation (ITF) Tuesday named U.S. Open titlist Stefan Edberg as its men's world champion. Yugoslav Monica Seles, who won the Australian, French and U.S. Open titles but pulled out of Wimbledon, was voted women's world champion by a three-man ITF panel. Fred Perry, Tony Trabert and Frank Sedgeman. Although he won only one of the four Grand Slam titles, Edberg won five other tournaments, more than any other player. Seles cited injury as her reason for missing Wimbledon and also pulled out of Yugoslavia's Federation Cup team. But she reached the final of all 16 events she played this year, winning ten of them.

Ioka wins WBA title

TOKYO (R) — Japan's Hiroki Ioka wrestled the World Boxing Association (WBA) junior-flyweight title from South Korean veteran Yuh Myung-Woo on a split decision Tuesday. Judge Oscar Perez scored the contest in Yuh's favour at 115-113, but the decision was swayed by Harold Lederman, who made it 115-113, and Phil Newman, who scored it 117-112 for Ioka. Ioka, 22, the former World Boxing Council (WBC) strawweight champion, used his superior reach to score repeatedly with left jabs in the early rounds. Yuh, fighting for the first time abroad in the 18th defence of the title he wrestled from American Joey Olivo in 1985, launched an offensive from the eighth round and unleashed some powerful right crosses to Ioka's face. But the 27-year-old South Korean was unable to make up the points deficit and slumped to the first defeat of his professional career. Ioka improved his record to 19-2-1, including nine knockouts while Yuh's record dropped to 36-1 with 14 knockouts.

Kasparov tops chess ratings

MANILA (R) — World champion Garry Kasparov of the Soviet Union retained the number one position in the chess ratings with 2,780 points but Soviet dominance of the top 10 has been broken. International Chess Federation chief Florencio Campomanes said in Manila Tuesday. The top 10 now include England's Nigel Short, India's Viswanathan Anand, the Estonian Alexei Shirov and Gata Kamsky of the United States. Campomanes said in a press statement. Judit Polgar of Hungary, with a 2,550 rating, kept her number one position among women players.

Leconte replaces Forget on French team

PERTH, Australia (AP) — Henri Leconte was named Tuesday to replace Davis Cup teammate Guy Forget on the French team competing in the Hopman Cup Team Tennis Tournament, which begins on Dec. 27. Leconte and Forget both were members of the French team that scored an upset victory over the United States in the Davis Cup final in Lyon earlier this month. Leconte will partner Julie Halard on the French team in the 12-nation exhibition event, which features men's and women's singles and mixed doubles contests. Forget told organisers he had to withdraw because of tendinitis in his right knee. The injury is not expected to prevent him from playing in next month's Australian Open in Melbourne. France is to play the British team of Jeremy Bates and Sarah Loosmore in the first round of the Hopman Cup. Germany, which will be represented by Boris Becker and Steffi Graf, is the top seed for the Hopman Cup. Other top pairings include the brother-and-sister Spanish pair of Emilio and Arantxa Sanchez and the American combination of Grand Slam Cup winner David Wheaton and Mary Joe Fernandez. The tournament will be played at the Perth Superdome from Dec. 27 to Jan. 3.

Joyner-Kersey aiming for record

SYDNEY (AP) — Reigning Olympic champion Jackie Joyner-Kersey says she will be aiming to break her own heptathlon world record at the 1992 Barcelona Olympics. The American athlete said she was aiming for 7,300 points in the event. Her current world record is 7,291. "Seven thousand, three hundred. That's the target," she said Tuesday during a visit to Sydney as part of a promotional tour. Her husband and coach, Bob Kersey, believes the world record is within her reach. "I think she can go 7,300 if she is healthy and everything goes well," Kersey said. Joyner-Kersey finished second behind Australia's Glynis Nunn in the inaugural Olympic heptathlon in Los Angeles in 1984. She won in Seoul in 1988. Success in Spain would give her the dual distinction of becoming the first female to win heptathlon medals at three successive Olympics and the first woman to win consecutive gold medals in the event. "What we are looking to do is to try and recapture the Olympic title and bring home back-to-back gold medals," said Bob Kersey. "No male or female athlete that I know has three Olympic multi-event medals, so I think that would be historic. And I think at that point you would have to consider her to be one of the best multi-event athletes ever," he said.

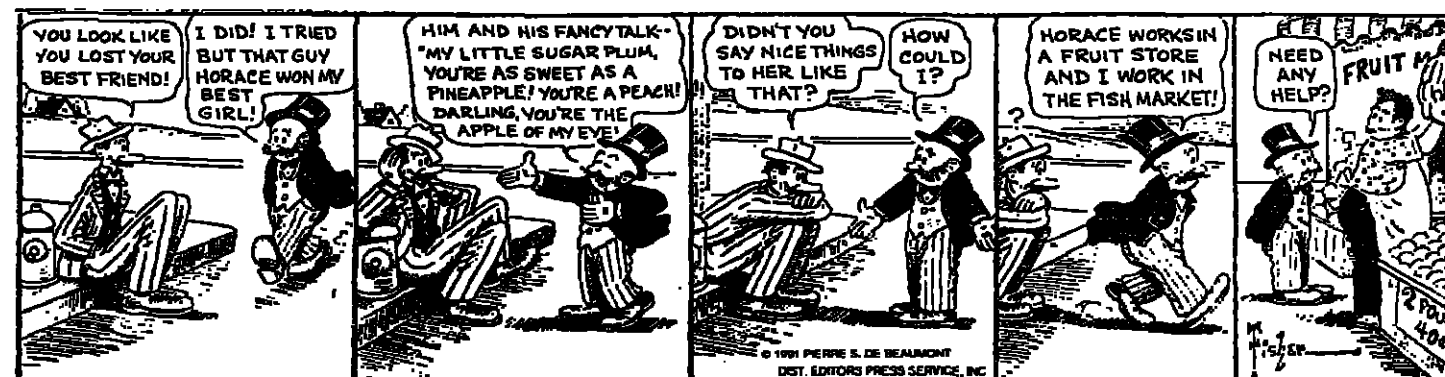
Peanuts



Andy Capp



Mutt'n'Jeff



Sao Paulo wins state title

RIO DE JANEIRO (R) — Sao Paulo tied Corinthians 0-0 to win the Sao Paulo state tournament while Flamengo battled to a draw with Fluminense in the first game of the Rio state finals. Sao Paulo, the defending national champion, needed only a tie to win the title due to its 3-0 trouncing of Corinthians in the opening playoff game last Sunday. The champions dominated the play, but their careful defence resulted in a slow game. Rai, the state's top scorer with 20 goals — including all three in last week's match — had a few opportunities but was unable to score against Corinthians goalie Ronaldo. In Rio, Flamengo dominated play, but had to settle for a 1-1 draw. Fluminense took the lead at the 22nd minute on a penalty shot by Ezio but Flamengo struck back two minutes later when Paulo Nunes headed the ball past the outstretched arms of Fluminense goalie Ricardo Pinto.

Spain-Albania soccer match postponed

MADRID (AP) — European soccer officials concerned for Spanish players' safety Monday postponed a match with Albania in Tirana this week. Spanish national team players learned the European Championships qualifying match was off as they prepared to fly to the Albanian capital, where severe food shortages have triggered rioting. The match had been scheduled for Wednesday. "The Albanian Federation cannot guarantee that the game will be played under normal circumstances and has been unable to guarantee the security of either Spanish players or the UEFA delegate," the Geneva-based body said in a telex sent Monday to both soccer federations. The UEFA said it had been trying unsuccessfully to contact Albanian soccer officials since Friday. An official in the UEFA press office said there were no immediate plans to reschedule the game. The result of the match would have no bearing on the Group 1 standings. Both Spain and Albania failed to win a berth to next year's final round in Sweden, losing out to unbeaten France.

Czech star quits Aston Villa

BIRMINGHAM, England (AP) — After spending 13 months battling injury, Czechoslovak soccer player Ivo Stas has quit England's Aston Villa without ever playing a competitive match for the team. Signed from Banik Ostrava for \$540,000, Stas, 26, has been told his nagging Achilles tendon injury will not survive the rigors of an English season, the club said. Villa will receive a \$900,000 insurance pay-out because of the injury, but manager Ron Atkinson said it was a sad blow for the player and the team. "If he hadn't picked up the injury he could well have developed into a Jan Moelby type of player, as I was hoping to play him in midfield," said Atkinson, in a reference to Liverpool's cultured Dane, who can play either in midfield or defence. "Stas has trained every day this season, but three specialists have confirmed he would not be able to stand the rigors of the English first division."

Nannini undergoes operation

FLORENCE, (R) — Italian motor racing driver Alessandro Nannini had another operation on the forearm he severed in a helicopter crash last year. Nannini had his right forearm sewn back on after the crash and this latest operation on the tendons was designed to enable him to close his hand more easily. "The operation was a complete success and all we have to do now is wait," said surgeon Carlo Bufalini. The former Benetton driver was injured when his helicopter crashed near his parents' villa outside Siena in Tuscany. He has already driven a racing car in tests at the Mugello Circuit and said in October he was 99 per cent certain of returning to Formula One in March 1992.

Manchester's Olympic bid wins support

LONDON (R) — The British government has promised to fund a feasibility study by the city of Manchester on a bid to stage the 2000 Olympics and said it would decide on further financial support by the end of February. An official at Prime Minister John Major's office said Mr. Major agreed in a meeting with the Manchester Organising Committee to make up to £2 million (\$3.6 million) available for a feasibility study into the bid. This was needed before there could be a firm commitment to provide government support to back the bid and help build new sports facilities if the games were brought to Manchester, in Northern England. The bid must be submitted to the International Olympic Committee by April next year. Mr. Major, a keen sports fan, has been more enthusiastic towards a British Olympics bid than his predecessor Margaret Thatcher, but remained cautious about committing government funds. "Very large sums (are) potentially at stake and the implications would need to be considered very carefully," the official said.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 18, 1991

By Thomas S. Pierson, Astrologer, Carroll Righter Foundation

GENERAL TENDENCIES: As Mercury goes direct today you will find the logic of blocked activity unleashed. Plan on changing your plans to day and expect to accomplish a great deal without equal effort.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The very early morning is excellent for utilizing some generated energy to your advantage but later in the day finds you in a hot pot of discord.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You need to be most careful you do nothing whatever that could annoy one in a powerful position and to handle credit matters with exactness.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) Now you find you have all sorts of demands upon you where some new activity is concerned but make your plans early and don't make sudden changes.

MOON CHILDREN: (June 22 to July 21) You would like to get out from under some pressure you feel is more than you can bear but you'd find it waiting you even more difficult to do later.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You have some associates who you don't know what to expect from next so go along cautiously and do nothing to stir up his latent animosity.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) Show now you are the one who

can keep steadfastly at the work expected of you despite some pretty heavy pressure to get involved in gossip.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) Whatever now awaits you that requires you keep a smile ever present can be sensibly made to improve instead of remaining a pain in the neck.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) Matters at your work residence can be in a pretty hectic state unless you remain cool and objective when tensions do rise there with others.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) Use more than average care in motion whether on the highway or in buildings or you could come an expensive cropper that lays you up a while.

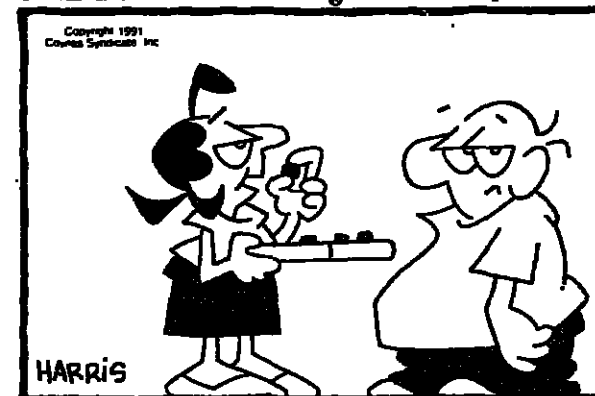
CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Think out some new means by which you can gain the good will of those with whom you have any sort of financial or other practical consideration.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You want to let fly in all directions but if you can be up early and decide how to handle surrounding problems you can save yourself considerable trouble.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) You want to burst out from under those limitations that you feel are more than you can bear but look at them and handle them impersonally.

THE BETTER HALF.

By Harris



"Eating chocolate is good for a woman my age. Zits make me look younger!"

JUMBLE.

THAT SCRAMBLED WORD GAME

by Henri Arnold and Bob Lee

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

ZAUGE

LULKS

RAWHOR

WHARTT

Now arrange the circled letters to form the surprise answer, as suggested by the above cartoon.

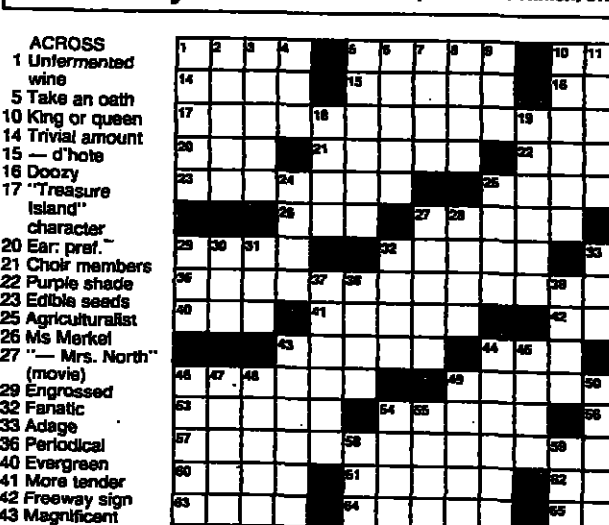
Answer here: "O O O O T O O O O O"

(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: BATON PERKY MIDWAY GUILTY

Answer: How the sandwichman felt when he finished his day's work—IT WAS A BIG LETDOWN

THE Daily Crossword by James E. Hinish, Jr.



Yesterday's Puzzle Solved:

1 Unfettered wine
5 Take an oath
10 King or queen
14 Trivial amount
15 - O'he
16 Doory
17 "Treasure island" character
20 Ear, pref.
21 Choir members
22 Purple shade
23 Edible seeds
25 Agriculturalist
26 Ms. Merkel
27 "Mrs. North" (movie)
29 Engrossed
32 Fanatic
33 Adage
36 Periodical
40 Evergreen
41 More tender
42 Freeway sign
43 Magnificent
44 - Tin Tin
46 Toad-like
48 Ornate in style
53 Pious
54 Destiny
56 Sturm - Orang
57 Marquand title
60 "Bliss" a.g.
61 Ms. Massey
62 Skinny
63 London
64 Peewee
65 Pond plant
18 Maugham title
19 "Gunslinger" across Blake
24 Ballet attire
25 Phyllis Diller's ex?
27 Initiated
28 Umo'n kin
30 "Do - say, not..."
31 Alphabet run
32 Flowerless plant
33 Hockey team
34 Difference between Titan and Titan?
35 Kind of blanket
37 Laban's neighbor
38 Certain horse
39 Original
40 "Superman"
41 P.M. MacDonald
46 Hussein's land
46 Hurt
47 City on Korea
48 Prepare to
49 "Dark Victory" star George
50 Feather
51 Strip of sails and spars
52 Plant swelling
54 Cabbage
56 Heb. proph.
58 Strike
59 Dos Passos' work

Financial Markets

U.S. Dollar in International Markets

Currency	New York Close	Tel Aviv Close
Sterling Pound	1.8250	1.8230
Deutsche Mark	1.5745	1.5755
Swiss Franc	1.3935	1.3933
French Franc	5.3890	5.3856
Japanese Yen	126.43	126.23
European Currency Unit	1.2935	1.2924

Interbank Interest Rates

Currency	1 MTH	3 MTHS	6 MTHS	12 MTHS
U.S. Dollar	4.75	4.50	4.50	4.62
Sterling Pound	10.62	10.43	10.43	10.57
Deutsche Mark	9.43	9.43	9.43	9.37
Swiss Franc	8.18	8.00	7.95	7.87
French Franc	9.68	9.75	9.66	9.56
Japanese Yen	6.31	6.03	5.81	5.43
European Currency Unit	10.50	10.15	10.37	9.93

Prevalent Metals

Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm	Metal	USD/Oz	JD/Gm
Gold	357.35	6.82	Silver	3.84	0.083

Central Bank of Jordan Exchange Rate Bulletin

Currency	Bid	Offer
U.S. Dollar	0.6990	0.6610
Sterling Pound	1.2362	1.2424
Deutsche Mark	0.4307	0.4329
Swiss Franc	0.4571	0.4695
French Franc	0.1261	0.1267
Japanese Yen	0.5292	0.5316
Dutch Guilder	0.3818	0.3837
Swedish Krona	0.1180	0.1186
Italian Lira	0.0571	0.0574
Belgian Franc	0.02056	0.02096

Other Currencies

Currency	Bid	Offer
Bahraini Dinar	1.7720	1.7780
Lebanese Lira	0.0770	0.0775
Saudi Riyal	0.1807	0.1813
Kuwaiti Dinar	—	—
Qatari Riyal	0.1840	0.1849
Egyptian Pound	0.2050	0.2160
Omani Riyal	1.7380	1.7460
UAE Dirham	0.1840	0.1849
Greek Drachma	0.3755	0.3770
Cypriot Pound	1.5070	1.5175

CAS Indices for Amman Financial Market

Index	15/12/91 Close	16/12/91 Close
All-Share	129.44	129.01
Banking Sector	108.56	106.73
Insurance Sector	127.97	128.08
Industry Sector	160.86	162.55
Services Sector	142.49	142.37

LONDON EXCHANGE RATES

LONDON (R) — Following are the buying and selling rates for leading world currencies and gold against the dollar at mid-session on the London foreign exchange and bullion markets Tuesday.

	15/12/91	16/12/91
One Sterling	1.8232/42	1.8232/42
One U.S. dollar	1.1435/40	1.1435/40
U.S. dollar	1.5732/42	1.5732/42
Canadian dollar	1.7750/60	1.7750/60
Deutsche marks	1.3920/30	1.3920/30
Dutch guilders	32.38/42	32.38/42
Swiss francs	5.3725/75	5.3725/75
Belgian francs	1188/1189	1188/1189
French francs	128.25/35	128.25/35
Italian lire	5.7530/80	5.7530/80
Japanese yen	6.1950/2000	6.1950/2000
Swedish crowns	6.1275/25	6.1275/25
Norwegian crowns	357.05/357.55	357.05/357.55
Danish crowns	—	—
U.S. dollars	—	—

Turks sign port venture to link Soviet republics with West

ANKARA (R) — Turkish, Australian and U.S. firms have agreed to further develop a Black Sea port to handle trade between the West and independent Soviet republics, a senior official from Turkey's Alarko Holding Company said Tuesday.

Chairman Ishak Alaton said Alarko signed a joint venture with Austrian Rosh Credit International SAH and American Hovsons Inc. last week in Moscow for a \$20 million investment in a Turkish Black Sea port next year.

He said Trabzon was the port most likely to be developed. New Jersey-based Hovsons would have a 50 per cent stake in the venture, called Alport, with the rest equally divided between the other two companies.

"The three companies decided to form a joint venture to develop a port and facilities in Turkey on the Black Sea to increase trade between Armenia and other Soviet republics and the West," Mr. Alaton told Reuters.

"The Trabzon port is already in a free zone. We will put up cranes, warehouses and other facilities in an area to be designated for us by the port administration," Mr. Alaton said.

Earlier this week, Turkey decided to recognise all Soviet republics which have declared independence. Several leaders of Central Asian republics have visited Ankara.

Mr. Alaton said a letter from Armenian Prime Minister Hrant Bagratyan to Turkish Prime Minister Suleyman Demirel this month asked Turkey to support the port venture.

EC accepts OECD aid credit rules

BRUSSELS (R) — The European Community (EC) Monday accepted new international rules designed to curtail the use of billions of dollars of development funds to promote rich nations' exports.

Dutch Finance Minister Wim Kok said EC members agreed to abide by rules set out in October at the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) to curb so-called tied aid credits to relatively wealthy developing countries.

"That's all been approved," Mr. Kok told Reuters after a meeting of the 12 EC finance ministers.

Some aid officials were worried that Germany, Spain and Italy, who have expressed reservations on the OECD scheme, together might have blocked EC acceptance of the deal which took two years of sometimes tough bargaining to reach.

The new rules are aimed at stopping industrialised states from offering cut-price aid money to the wealthiest developing nations, such as Mexico or Hong Kong, on condition they spend it on the creditor country's goods or services.

EC officials said for poorer developing countries with current per capita income of less than \$2,465 a year, such tied aid would be prohibited if the project was considered commercially viable.

They said only the poorest and smallest nations, such as Bangladesh and Vanuatu, could still be offered tied funds on the grounds they need all the money they can get.

Aid experts estimate up to \$10 billion of development funds a year are now used to "buy" into Third World markets.

Backers of the OECD agreement say it could help release this money for genuine development projects from hospitals to roads, and may boost overall financial flows to developing states.

FRANKFURT (R) — Soviet bankers Tuesday won a crucial three-month breathing space in bank debt repayments.

A meeting of representatives from 12 major banks, the Soviet Foreign Trade Bank (Vneshekonombank) and the Russian Central Bank agreed that payments due during the first three months of next year would be put off until the end of March.

Estimates for the Soviet Union's total foreign debt at the end of 1991 vary widely from \$57 to \$71 billion, a recent World Bank review of world debt said.

Sources close to the talks stressed that a cancellation of the debt had not been on the agenda.

"It was made clear that the Soviets will make every effort to repay the debts," one banker, who asked not be named, said.

The World Bank report said the Soviet Union earned enough money from its exports to pay interest on the debt, but a bunching of repayments meant it would be 1993 before it actually had the free cash to do so.

Vneshekonombank is faced a currency shortage. Export revenues scarcely cover debt servicing and other urgent payments, and a bank official said there could be difficulties in repaying debt in the coming months.

The Soviet bankers did not produce official figures on the amounts due in the first quarter of 1992.

A German newspaper said last week that redemption and interest payments of \$3.4 billion and \$130 million respectively were due in December.

The roll-over agreed in the early hours of Tuesday concerns debts taken up before Jan. 1, 1991, and due for payment between Dec. 5, 1991, and March 31, 1992.

Public and private securities, bonds, and short-term credit facilities at financial institutions were not included in the debt deferral.

U.S. economist Jeffery Sachs said at the weekend that the short-term economic outlook in the country was catastrophic and that concessions made by leading Western countries to help the Soviet economy were insufficient.

"This is no time to be collecting debts," he said, describing Soviet payment problems as a severe liquidity squeeze. But, he added, "the debts are payable in the long term."

Maxwell Communication makes bankruptcy filing

NEW YORK (AP) — Maxwell Communication Corp. PLC (MCC), one of the late Robert Maxwell's flagship public enterprises, announced late Monday it had filed for bankruptcy court protection in New York.

The filing was made under chapter 11 of the U.S. bankruptcy code.

Officials of the British company said they filed the petition in the United States mainly because the "bulk of its revenue and operating profit," was generated by American businesses.

Maxwell Communication reported an operating profit of \$344 million on revenue of 1.72 billion in the fiscal year ended March 21.

A spokeswoman for Maxwell Communication, Sally McEllweath, said the filing was only for the London-based holding company and did not cover any of its operating companies, which include the publisher MacMillan Inc. and Official Airline Guides, which publishes airline schedule.

The bankruptcy filing will permit Maxwell executives to devise a reorganisation plan while keeping creditors at bay.

Maxwell Communication is one of two public companies controlled by the Maxwell family. The other is mirror group newspapers PLC, also based in London.

Trading in stocks of both companies has been suspended since Dec. 2.

The Maxwell media empire has been engulfed in allegations of financial improprieties following Robert Maxwell's mysterious death at sea Nov. 5.

The chief allegation is that pension funds from Mirror Group were improperly diverted to help keep the empire afloat.

It carried a debt estimated at more than \$2 billion, much of it incurred in 1989, when Maxwell bought the book and information services company MacMillan for \$2.6 billion and Official Airline Guides for \$750 million.

Maxwell executives earlier insisted the company could meet a \$750 million interest payment due next fall without any problem.

But Kevin Maxwell, who took control of Maxwell Communication shortly after his father's death only to step down a few weeks later, conceded that the company would not be able to meet a \$1.25 billion payment due in 1994.

Maxwell Communication Chairman Peter Laister said the bankruptcy filing will allow the company "an opportunity to effect an orderly reconstruction of its liabilities in the best interests of all creditors of MCC."

It could not immediately be determined how much creditors are owed or how much in assets Maxwell Communication claimed.

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UAE banks hold half of their money abroad

ABU DHABI (R) — United Arab Emirates (UAE) banks have placed 53 billion dirhams (\$14.4 billion) in international markets, almost half of their total deposits, central bank governor Abdul Malek Al Hamar said Tuesday.

He told Reuters in an interview that the country's 55 banks had largely overcome the problems caused by the Gulf war.

A crisis of confidence in Gulf banking led to huge outflows from the region after Iraq's invasion of Kuwait in August 1990.

The Basle-based Bank for International Settlements reported earlier this month that money was steadily flowing back into the region, with the biggest transfers recorded for the UAE. It said \$3.8 billion was repatriated to banks in the UAE in the first half of 1991.

Sheikh Hamar said the banks' investments abroad were mostly in short-term deposits and financial instruments because UAE law bars banks from holding more than 25 per cent of their depositors' money in shares and stocks.

He said available indicators showed the banks were likely to report modest profits 1991 and that they had largely back on their feet.

"UAE national banks are in a sound financial position and have resources and assets which qualify them to enter international markets and benefit from opportunities there," he said without giving any details.

Commenting on reports that the central bank was actively seeking mergers among the country's domestic banks, the main victims of the Gulf crisis, Sheikh Hamar said that it would not force the banks to act.

But the central bank strongly favoured bank mergers that "would boost financial resources and consolidate competitiveness," he added.

Soviet bankers secure debt deferral deal

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China plans steps to attract increasing foreign investment

PEKING (Agencies) — China, eager to increase investment from abroad, plans to open more ports to trade and to encourage foreign investors to develop large tracts of land, an official report has said.

The English-language China Daily newspaper said the steps to increase foreign investment also will give a boost to reforms introduced in 1978 by senior leader Deng Xiaoping.

Official Chinese reports have said that foreign investment has surged this year. According to Chinese figures, during the first half of 1991 foreign investors signed more than 5,028 contracts valued at \$4.55 billion, a 93 per cent increase from the previous year.

Officials with the State Planning Commission said the new steps also include efforts to expand economic development zones, strengthen border trade and improve the domestic investment climate, the China Daily reported.

Officials said they expect five of China's coastal regions to attract foreign real estate investors, the newspaper said.

It said those are the Pearl River Delta in southern Guangdong province, the Fuzhou and Xiamen areas in eastern Fujian province, the Pudong zone in Shanghai, the northern city of Tianjin, and the southern island province of Hainan.

The report said foreign investors from several countries have already shown interest in the coastal cities.

It said that from 1987 to 1990, investors from the United States, Japan, Singapore, Thailand, the Philippines, Hong Kong and Taiwan bought leasing rights for 80 plots of land in 20 Chinese coastal cities.

The investors paid \$110 million for the rights to 665 hectares (1,642 acres), the newspaper said.

Meanwhile China is finding jobs for its millions of unemployed city workers but most of them are simply getting an "iron rice bowl" — lifetime guaranteed employment which the state is desperately trying to phase out.

The China Daily said that four million city workers were given jobs during the first nine months of this year, making the urban unemployment rate about 2.6 per cent.

Despite the massive job hand-out, the new urban unemployment rate marks an increase over June when official news reports said it had fallen to below two per cent.

Diplomats say China's unemployment statistics are notoriously unreliable and real unemployment among the estimated 200 million urban residents probably tops ten per cent.

The China Daily said officials were worried about the employment situation because more than half of this year's new jobs were filled by administrative decree rather than through the more economically efficient contract system.

Israel sets new foreign exchange policy

TEL AVIV (R) — Israeli Finance Minister Yitzhak Mordechai announced Monday a new system for setting foreign exchange rates against the shekel which he said would end wild speculation and help businesses.

Under the new system, which becomes effective Tuesday morning, the median rate of the shekel against a basket of currencies was lowered by three per cent. The median rate will be lowered by an additional nine per cent by the end of 1992, Mordechai told a news conference.

He emphasised that the new policy was not a devaluation of the shekel which would continue to be set according to a market forces.

The central bank will continue setting the daily shekel foreign rates within a five per cent spread above the below that day's median rate.

Instead of adjusting the median rate several times annually under the current system, the central bank will now devalue the median rate daily in small increments but not more than a total of nine per cent by the end of 1992.

Mordechai said one of the goals of the new system was to prevent wild speculation about devaluations that periodically spurred runs on dollars, interest rates increases and general instability in the market.

Karachi shops close to avoid government raids

KARACHI, Pakistan (R) — Shopkeepers in Pakistan's biggest city, Karachi, closed their businesses Tuesday to avoid raids by government inspectors looking for adulterated food and medicine.

The owners of food shops and general stores have blamed wholesalers and manufacturers for watering down milk; mixing rice powder into ground spices; adding cheap fats to butter and putting fake ingredients in medicines.

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Baker told Soviet military will stay out of politics

BISHKEK, Soviet Union (R) — U.S. Secretary of State James Baker has assured that the Soviet military will stay out of politics despite a radical transformation of the former Communist superpower, a senior U.S. official said Tuesday.

The official also said Soviet Defence Minister Yevgeny Shaposhnikov expects to become the commander-in-chief of the armed forces of the new commonwealth of independent states formed last week by Russia, Ukraine and Byelorussia.

The official, who asked not to be named, was speaking to reporters as Mr. Baker flew to Bishkek, capital of the Central Asian Republic of Kyrgyzstan, on a tour to evaluate the gradual collapse of the Soviet Union.

Discussing a meeting Mr. Baker held Monday with Gen. Shaposhnikov and Russian leader Boris Yeltsin, the official said: "What we got was a pretty clear reflection of a military that is not going to intrude in politics."

The official said Mr. Baker had the impression that the armed forces were "a professional military which sits apart from politics

and ... will reconcile themselves to arrangements which are worked out."

The U.S. administration is worried that the armed forces, increasingly tired of the political chaos enveloping the country, could take control in a bid to restore order.

Robert Strauss, the U.S. ambassador to Moscow, has described the forces as "the wild card" in Soviet politics.

Mr. Baker held 10 hours of talks Monday, first with Mr. Yeltsin and then President Mikhail Gorbachev, who is fighting an increasingly desperate battle to keep his post.

Mr. Gorbachev has been undergoing the death of a thousand cuts since last August's failed hardline coup, watching his powers being stripped away one by one.

He is still nominally commander-in-chief, but Russia wants him to hand over this authority as well.

Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk has already announced he was taking control of the armed forces on his territory and on Tuesday Azerbaijani leader

Ayaz Muttalibov followed suit.

Mr. Yeltsin Monday gave Mr. Baker details of plans for military control in the commonwealth, reiterating its members would sign a defence treaty providing for a joint forces command.

"In the context of looking at how the commonwealth is going to operate, he (Shaposhnikov) talks about this defence alliance ... and says he will be the commander-in-chief of this defence alliance," the official said.

Mr. Baker was due to spend three hours in Kyrgyzstan before flying onto Kazakhstan. Both republics have said they are ready to join the commonwealth at a meeting of republics in the Kazakh capital Alma-Ata this weekend.

One of the main purposes of Mr. Baker's trip is to urge that the Soviet Union's strategic nuclear arsenal is not split up as the Soviet Union disintegrates.

Mr. Baker said after talks with Mr. Yeltsin and Mr. Gorbachev that he felt "very reassured" about the safety of Soviet nuclear arms.

Mr. Baker Monday also said the United States would consider

recognising Russia and Ukraine as independent states, underlining Gorbachev's precarious position.

Mr. Baker met Kyrgyzstan, President Askar Akayev and said afterwards he had "taken note and admired the president's commitment to democratisation."

Washington regards Mr. Akayev as a model advocate for democracy in Central Asia.

Meanwhile the lower chamber of the effectively defunct Soviet parliament said Tuesday President Gorbachev should resign because he had done nothing to stop the disintegration of the country.

"As the Soviet president has kept himself aloof from important national and state issues, we raise the question of his resignation," said an appeal adopted by the chamber and addressed to republican leaders and parliament.

The lower chamber's decision has no constitutional standing. It illustrates the collapse of central authority personified by Mr. Gorbachev, after a new agreement to create a commonwealth of independent states which proclaimed the Soviet Union dead.

Azeri president declares himself army commander

MOSCOW (AP) — President Ayaz Muttalibov of Azerbaijan declared himself commander-in-chief of all non-strategic armed forces on the territory of his troubled republic, news agencies reported Tuesday.

But the regional Interior Ministry troop commander said the troops should be withdrawn from the region because the decision to post them there was taken "at a time when the Soviet Union existed," the Soviet military newspaper Krasnaya Zvezda (Red Star) reported Tuesday.

"Now that Armenia and Azerbaijan are independent states, a different legal basis is needed to keep (Soviet) Union Interior Ministry troops there," Maj. Gen. A. Kulikov was quoted as telling Krasnaya Zvezda.

The newspaper identified Gen. Kulikov as chief of Soviet Interior Ministry troops for the Northern Caucasus and Transcaucasia, which includes Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia.

Mr. Muttalibov is the second president of a republic to claim control over Soviet forces and weapons, following Ukraine's President Leonid Kravchuk.

Soviet President Mikhail Gorbachev still retains the title of commander-in-chief of the Soviet Union's arsenal of 27,000 nuclear weapons and 3.5 million military personnel.

The leaders of the new Commonwealth of Independent States, having claimed control over military policy, have refused to guarantee he will hold that job much longer.

The Azerbaijan Defence Ministry said Tuesday it did not know how many Soviet army and Interior Ministry troops were based in the republic, but past reports have indicated there are

at least tens of thousands. Azerbaijan is not one of the four Soviet republics which houses nuclear weapons.

The Caucasus mountains republic has been locked in a bloody conflict with the neighbouring Republic of Armenia for nearly four years over control of Nagorno-Karabakh, a mainly Armenian enclave located inside Azerbaijan.

In a separate development, Armenian President Levon Ter-Petrosyan introduced a state of emergency in a region where local residents stopped a train and took 70 passengers hostage Monday. The Soviet News Agency TASS reported.

The train was going through the Armenian district of Megri from Baku, capital of Azerbaijan, to Nakhichevan, an Azeri ruled region near the border with Iran.

TASS said the prisoners were taken in retaliation for the capture by Azeri forces of three Armenians last month.

At least nine people were killed and 16 wounded over the last 24 hours in Nagorno-Karabakh, TASS said Monday.

Moscow radio said Azeri special police opened fire on the regional capital Stepanakert and four Armenian villages.

"The situation in Stepanakert remains extremely difficult. There is no flour, the bread factory has stopped. One third of the town has no water supply," the radio said.

Mr. Ter-Petrosyan's decision to introduce a state of emergency for three months in the Megri district was backed by the Armenian Parliament. It provided for a night curfew, the Armenian News Agency Snark said.

Kohl hails EC move on Yugoslavia as victory for Bonn

DRESDEN, Germany (R) — Chancellor Helmut Kohl Tuesday hailed the European Community's decision to recognise breakaway Yugoslav republics next month as a great victory for Germany.

"I am pleased to be able to say today that the Croats will not be left alone," he said to a standing ovation from the 1,000 delegates at the final session of a congress of his Christian Democratic Union (CDU) in Dresden.

"This is a great victory for German foreign policy."

Mr. Kohl confirmed Germany, the staunchest backer of war-torn Croatia and neighbouring Slovenia, would decide Thursday to recognise any republic that pledges by Dec. 23 to guarantee democracy, minority rights and stable borders.

He said a late-night compromise in Brussels, where foreign ministers agreed that other EC states would decide on recognition on Jan. 15, proved Germany would act in concert with its partners.

To underline this point, Bonn will not put its recognition decision into effect until Jan. 15.

Mr. Kohl set off alarm bells at the United Nations and among key allies when he announced this month that Bonn would recognise Slovenia and Croatia by Christmas.

Mr. Kohl, whose support for the republics stems from historical ties and from Germany's new high-profile role in Central Europe, said he hoped peace could soon come to Yugoslavia.

"The decision of the EC foreign ministers is a clear signal to the Serbian leadership and the military in Belgrade," he said. "Those in responsibility are now called on to finally end this senseless bloodshed and open the way for the stationing of U.N. peacekeeping troops."

In Zagreb, Croatian officials said Tuesday they were disappointed that the European Community (EC) had not recognised their republic but welcomed pledges to offer recognition next month.

Serbian officials condemned the decision by the 12 EC foreign ministers in Brussels to recognise any Yugoslav republic as an independent state on Jan. 15 if it meets conditions on human rights, ethnic minorities and democracy.

"It is both positive and negative," Croatian Information Minister Branko Salaj told reporters in Zagreb, the Croatian capital.

"It is negative because the EC did not decide yesterday, but it is in our interest that recognition is a joint action if possible. If the price for this is waiting three more weeks, then it is a price worth paying."

He welcomed Germany's decision to recognise Croatia and its neighbour Slovenia Thursday but to make the move effective from Jan. 15, although he said it was not ideal.

"We have been disappointed so many times so a German unilateral decision would somehow encourage us," Mr. Salaj said.

He also hoped the decision would help persuade the United States to favour recognition of Croatia.

Avalanche shrinks New Zealand's tallest peak

CHRISTCHURCH, New Zealand (AP) — Mount Cook, the highest mountain in the South Pacific, will be off-limits to climbers for an undetermined period after being shortened by a massive avalanche. The slide extended 6.5 kilometres down the Tasman Glacier and lowered the 3,764-metre peak by several metres, the Conservation Department said. More falls are considered likely. Mount Cook is one of New Zealand's top tourist attractions. A group of six climbers watched in awe from a hut about a kilometre away as millions of tonnes of snow, ice and rock came tumbling down Mount Cook's slopes for several hours early Saturday. David Ellis, was among the group that had awoken at midnight for a day of climbing, described the sound as like a field "full of a thousand bells amplified a thousand times. There were green and yellow flashes from the rocks. It was on a horrendous scale." The group left the hut to climb Mt. Tasman, on the opposite side of the glacier. By the time they reached the summit, the dust had settled, and the magnitude of the avalanche became apparent. "It was one big black mess," Mr. Ellis said. "There were acres of it." The slide obliterated one of the twin, pyramid-shaped Anzac peaks on the eastern side of the Grand Plateau and turned the mountain's east face, usually a 30- to 40-degree incline, into an almost vertical drop. The summit was left teetering above a concave slope.

IRA fire-bomb found in children's toy

BELFAST (R) — Northern Ireland police on Tuesday accused Irish Republican Army (IRA) guerrillas of sinking to a new low after parents discovered a fire-bomb hidden in a children's toy bought at a Belfast store.

The fire-bomb, now a favourite weapon of the IRA in its battle to oust Britain from Northern Ireland, was found inside a toy car.

"The IRA has sunk to a new low with the planting of this device," a police spokesman said. "It is an absolute disgrace. There could be a toy sitting somewhere under a Christmas tree all wrapped up with a bomb sitting inside it."

The guerrilla group has planted

about 300 firebombs in Northern Ireland this year. Over the last three weekends it has also planted them in stores on the British mainland in a pre-Christmas bombing blitz.

London commuters faced more chaos Tuesday, one day after an IRA bomb on a railway track paralysed the British capital's rail network.

With police on full alert for a pre-Christmas blitz by the guerrillas, thousands of travellers had their journeys to work disrupted when a security scare caused by a loud bang shut marble arch underground rail station, one of London's busiest.

Transport Police evacuated the

packed station at the height of the morning rush-hour but said after a search that the alert had been caused by an electrical fault on a train.

"Obviously after the incidents of the last couple of weeks everyone is very jumpy. We're certainly not taking any chances," a spokesman for London underground said.

Security was also stepped up at London's Heathrow Airport, the world's busiest. Police removed litter bins and towed away unattended vehicles.

Christmas is Heathrow's busiest time with more than half a million people likely to use it between Dec. 20 and 24.

Olszewski gives up bid to form Polish government

WARSAW (R) — Polish Prime Minister Jan Olszewski gave up his attempt to form a government Tuesday. Polish News Agency (PAP) said.

It said Mr. Olszewski, reluctantly nominated prime minister by President Lech Walesa two weeks ago, told parliamentary leaders he was unable to form a government with a parliamentary majority.

Mr. Olszewski was the third politician to try and fail to form a government since Poland's first free post-war parliamentary elections on Oct. 27 returned a deeply fragmented parliament with little possibility of forming a stable majority.

Mr. Olszewski, a former Solidarity lawyer, headed a five-party centre-right coalition that crumbled under the strain of trying to agree on an economic programme.

Two parties abandoned the alliance last week — the Free Market Liberal Democratic Congress (KLD) of outgoing Prime Minister Jan Krzysztof Bielecki and the Nationalist Confederation for Independent Poland (KPN).

Mr. Krzysztof Krol, a leader of the KPN, told reporters Tuesday Mr. Olszewski would present his resignation to parliament.

Mr. Olszewski's bid collapsed partly because a head-on collision with Mr. Walesa, who refused his support in a fundamental disagreement over economic policy.

Mr. Olszewski proposed an anti-recession policy to soften the industrial collapse and soaring unemployment into which Poland has sunk under the impact of the "shock therapy" policies of the first two Solidarity governments.

WORLD NEWS IN BRIEF

Bush approval rating slips to 47%

WASHINGTON (AP) — President George Bush's approval rating has slipped to the lowest level of his presidency, driven down by doubts over his handling of the economy, according to a new Washington Post-ABC News poll. Bush's approval rating has fallen to 47 per cent, according to the survey published in Tuesday editions of the Washington Post and which was reported Monday night on ABC's World News Tonight. Six weeks ago 59 per cent of Americans approved of the way Mr. Bush was handling his job, according to the poll, which said concern over jobs and the economy appeared to account for the decline. The poll was a survey of 1,512 randomly selected adults conducted from Dec. 11 through Dec. 15. The margin of sampling error was plus or minus 3 per cent. The poll was conducted by Chilton Research of Radnor. Nearly nine in 10 of those polled characterised the economy as "not so good" or "poor." Just one in 10 called the economy "good" or "excellent."

Khmer Rouge team back in Phnom Penh

PHNOM PENH (R) — Heavily armed police took up positions around the new Cambodian home of the Khmer Rouge Tuesday when a group of the Maoist radicals arrived back in the city their leaders were driven from last month. Mak Ben, the Khmer Rouge's senior official on the secretariat of Cambodia's provisional Supreme National Council (SNC), arrived with his delegation to a low-key welcome. Most Cambodians seemed unaware that members of the hated organisation had returned. Mak Ben made no comment at Phnom Penh Airport when he arrived from Bangkok with seven other members of the China-backed Khmer Rouge, among them Chan Youran, ambassador to Peking during 1975-1978 "killing fields" years.

U.S. scaling back weapons production

WASHINGTON (AP) — The end of the cold war will soon be felt in America's nuclear weapons production plants. Energy Secretary James Watkins has unveiled plans to scale back weapons production activities in the coming decade. He said the work force involved in nuclear warhead production — now more than 30,000 people in 12 states — will be cut in half. Some consolidation is expected within a few years, while other actions are likely to take a dozen years or more, Energy Department officials said. Many of the workers will be retrained to help in environmental cleanup activities.

Timor massacre commission seen losing credibility

JAKARTA (R) — The head of an official Indonesian inquiry into last month's East Timor massacre has supported the army's widely disputed account that only 19 people were killed.

Diplomats said the comments by Mr. Djelani, carried by the official Antara News Agency Tuesday, threatened to undermine the credibility of the inquiry commission's final report.

Witnesses say at least 100 people were killed when troops on Nov. 12 fired on a crowd mourning the earlier death of an independence sympathiser. The Australian government has estimated that 75 people were shot.

"What is at issue is the credibility of the report itself ... One thing which would undermine that would be to ignore witness reports of the death toll," a

Western diplomat said.

Antara Tuesday quoted Mr. Djelani as backing the army tally, saying he could find no evidence of other corpses after searching suspected secret burial sites.

The commission had just spent three weeks seeking evidence in the former Portuguese colony which Indonesia annexed in 1976, a move still not internationally recognised.

"Where does that leave the other witnesses' account? There are many ways of disposing of bodies (other than burying them) ... it's very difficult when some ministers privately admit the number is higher," another diplomat said.

Diplomats said they expected the report to be published around Christmas when a critical West's attention would be distracted.

N. Zealand backs down on extradition of French agent

WELLINGTON (R) — New Zealand, bowing to French pressure, said Tuesday it would not seek the extradition from Switzerland of a French spy accused of helping to bomb the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior in 1985.

Justice Minister Doug Graham said the government, for a mixture of political and judicial reasons, would not pursue an extradition request lodged by New Zealand Police, who say Gerald Andries was part of a French spy team.

A few hours after the decision Andries was released from jail in the Swiss city of Basle, the city prosecutor's office said.

"Andries will not be brought to justice but New Zealand has to uphold international law ... I suppose in a way you could say the French have got away with it," Mr. Graham told a news conference.

"But international condemnation of France remains," he said, adding there was a prime facie case for manslaughter against Mr. Andries. A Greenpeace photographer was killed in the blast.

Greenpeace said its lawyers would seek an injunction against the government's decision.

"Our attorneys will be there (in court) first thing in the morning New Zealand time," Greenpeace International Executive Director Steve Sawyer told Reuters from the environmentalist group's headquarters in Amsterdam.

A spokesman for the group of New Zealand accused Mr. Graham of backing down on a previous commitment not to interfere in the judicial process.

"It's gutless, they have caved in. They have made a political decision when they said they would leave it up to the courts," said Greenpeace spokeswoman Bunney McDiarmid, who was a crewmember of the Rainbow Warrior.

"The man is wanted for murder. The kind of message they are sending is that if you are a government terrorist you can get away with murder in this country," she told Reuters.

Mr. Graham acknowledged the police had at least as good a case against Andries as they had against two other French agents, Alain Mafart and Dominique Prieur, who pleaded guilty to manslaughter and were sentenced to 10 years in 1985.

U.S. charities feeling the pinch during recession

WASHINGTON (AP) — There will be no fresh fruit for the needy this season at the Interface Pantry in Aurora, Illinois.

At soup kitchens in Baltimore, the Christmas baskets will be smaller than usual.

The homeless families that come into our friends' place in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, "are in worse shape," says Shelter Director Jim Hamilton.

As the recession drags on, the ranks of those in need are increasing and the resources of those usually able to help are being strained, a survey by the Associated Press shows.

"Some people who were in donor ranks last year are in the receiver ranks this year," said Stephen Gibbs, executive director of the FreeStore-Foodbank in Cincinnati.

But people are still digging into their pockets and pantries to help those less well off. "The public is mindful that times are bad," said Mr. Gibbs.

Despite the best intentions, though, donations are down in many places.

At the Alameda County Food Bank in Oakland, California, food and money contributions have dipped 20 per cent in recent months, Executive Director John Mumper said.

"We have less to give away than last year because the donations didn't come through," said Dorothy Durham, director of Citizen Community Development Corp., which distributes holiday food baskets in Buffalo, New York.

In Aurora, layoffs at the Cater-

pillar Tractor Plant contributed to a 30 per cent increase in the demand for food baskets, said Julie Newberry, director of the Interface Pantry.

"We are not going to be able to provide anyone with fresh fruit," she said. "They may get five cans of vegetables instead of six, or three cans of soup instead of four."

Bill Ewing, director of the Maryland Food Bank in Baltimore, said the organisation received as many bags of food this year as last, but the bags had 20 per cent less food in them.

"The baskets will be smaller this year, and it's tough for people," he said.

Kathy Howe, director of the Irving Park Community Food Pantry in Chicago, said requests for food have increased almost 40 per cent in six months and "if things do not get better we will probably have to start refusing people."

"We used to laugh around here because the president said there's no recession," Ms. Howe said. "He should have called us — we could have told him."

The news is not all bad.

The General Service Administration says it has channelled more than \$207 million worth of food and other items left over from the Gulf war to non-profit food programmes.

Some organisations said Christmas giving was good.

Lee Ann Wright, director of the Charles County Children's Aid Society in St. Charles, Maryland, said giving to the society's annual Christmas connection has been "enormous."

Japan sends senior official to Burma for talks

BANGKOK (R) — A senior Japanese official travelled to Burma Tuesday to try to persuade the junta, which suppressed student protests with bayonets and barbed wire last week, to heed international opinion.

"Japan would only like to persuade, not to demand, it to heed international opinions," an official at the Japanese embassy in Bangkok said.

"We don't want to apply pressure on the SLORC (Burma's State Law and Order Restoration Council) as such action may make it more stubborn."

However the official said Burma's human rights record would help Japan determine future aid levels. Tokyo now contributes only humanitarian assistance.

He said the three-day visit by Deputy Foreign Minister Kunihiko Saito was Tokyo's first high-level official contact with the military government in Rangoon in recent years.

The official said Mr. Saito would meet his Burmese counterpart for talks that might include the junta's widely condemned human rights record.

The military officers who seized power after a bloody crackdown on a pro-democracy movement in 1988 have refused to turn over power to the opposition that won free general elec-

tions in May 1990.

Last week's protests coincided with the award of the Nobel Peace Prize to opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, who has been under house arrest in Rangoon since July 1989.

Foreign residents of Rangoon say up to 100 students may have been arrested when the army sent in heavily armed reinforcements to put down the demonstrations. The junta later closed all universities, colleges and technical institutes.

Official Radio Rangoon announced Sunday that Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi had been expelled from the National League for Democracy (NLD), the party she helped found and led in absentia to electoral victory in 1990.

An alternative government set up in the jungle by dissidents, many of them exiled NLD members, said the expulsion vote among the few party leaders still in Rangoon had been conducted at gunpoint.

The alternative government called on the United Nations to act to free Mrs. Aung San Suu Kyi, who won the prize for peaceful campaigning for democracy in Burma, which has been ruled by a military oligarchy for 30 years.

Mr. Saito is due to chair a

meeting in Singapore of Japan's ambassadors to South East Asia after his trip to Burma.

Japan exported \$14.5 million worth of goods to Burma in 1990 and imported \$6 million worth, according to Japanese Finance Ministry figures.

Japan's ruling party abandoned plans Tuesday to introduce a new tax next year aimed at creating a global aid fund worth \$10 billion.

The plan, unveiled Friday by Finance Minister Tsutomu Hata, was dropped due to strong opposition within the ruling Liberal Democratic Party, an LDP official said.

"The LDP Tax Committee decided formally to give up the idea of an International Fund Tax because of lack of support within the party," he said.

The committee was now debating whether to set aside up to 200 billion yen (\$1.6 billion) in a special fund to cover Japan's international contributions, he said.

Mr. Hata said last Friday his ministry planned to raise 1.3 trillion yen (\$10.1 billion) from corporate, beer and cigarette taxes to boost Japan's international contributions.

He said 800 billion yen (\$6.2 billion) would go toward official development assistance (ODA) and 500 billion yen (\$3.9 billion)

to international aid programmes in for example the Soviet Union and Cambodia.

Ichiro Ozawa, a powerful LDP leader, drew up the global aid plan after Miyazawa failed to get a peacekeeping operations (PKO) bill through parliament.

Japan had hoped the PKO bill would allow it to send troops overseas for the first time since 1945 to help with United Nations peacekeeping efforts.

With the government expecting a large shortfall in its 1992 fiscal budget, the new tax plan was seen as a means of paying for some of Japan's growing international obligations.

The LDP's decision not to back the plan could affect the reputation of new Prime Minister Kiichi Miyazawa, who has been criticised for indecision and lack of leadership since forming his government six weeks ago.

Last week, his aides said Mr. Miyazawa backed the plan, but by Monday night they were saying he had decided not to support it ahead of upper house elections in July, newspapers said.

Since taking over, Mr. Miyazawa has faltered in his handling of parliament and lost support of opposition centrist parties on the PKO bill.

Los Angeles critics like Bugsy best

LOS ANGELES (AP) — If the early returns from critics are an indicator, it will be a Bugsy year. The Los Angeles Film Critics Association voted Saturday for the 1991 Achievement Awards. Warren Beatty's Las Vegas adventure vehicle was the critics' choice for best picture, said member Dorothy Rochms. Bugsy also got the nod from the critics for best screenplay (James Toback) and best director (Barry Levinson). Nick Nolte was the critics' pick for best actor for his role as a southern shyness' squire in Prince Of Tides. Mercedes Ruehl was chosen best actress for her role in The Fisher King. Supporting actor honours went to Michael Lerner for his Barton Fink appearance and Jane Horrocks for her role in Life Is Sweet. The critics named Roger Beakins best cinematographer for Barton Fink and chose Beatty And The Beast as the best animated film. Best documentary honours went to American Dream and the critics' favourite foreign language film was La Bête Noire. The critics liked the music of Zbigniew Preisner and honoured him for his body of work, including his scoring of Europa Europa, The Secret Life Of Veronica and At Play In The Fields Of The Lord.

